NEA Today
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A NEWSPAPER FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
VOL. 8
NO. 4

# KELLY PUSHED DRUGS...

## And took drugs, too. But she found help at a school-based health clinic.

## Could a clinic help your students?

See page 4

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## PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

# The Summit of Educational Excellence

"The time for rhetoric is past. The time for performance is now."

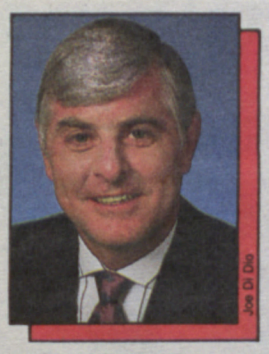
With these words, President Bush and our nation's governors brought the education summit of September 27-28 to a close. This no-nonsense statement was in keeping with the tenor of the summit. Style took a back seat to substance. Common sense moved front and center.

**The results were refreshing. The** summit participants agreed on the need for comprehensive school restructuring. President Bush himself asserted that the educational status quo needs a shake-up.

The governors agreed. The joint statement issued at the close of the summit calls for systemic change. And it endorses two proposals that I'm convinced can profoundly transform American education.

The first of these proposals calls for decentralized school management. It insists that effective reform will come only when decision-making authority rests squarely with the men and women who work at the local school site.

This proposal says, in effect, that our schools must be ruled democratically, not bureaucratically. Top-down school management must end. The tyranny of state and district regulations must end.


Joe Di Dio

*NEA President*
**Keith Geiger**

The second proposal calls on the federal government to pump new life—*and new funds*—into programs that prepare young people for the challenges of formal schooling. Children must be ready—both physically and emotionally. And they must be ready from day one.

This makes good sense. Education will never succeed so long as millions of students arrive at school burdened by poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and other consequences of social neglect. The federal government must make a new commitment to the success of Head Start, Chapter 1, and other programs that help disadvantaged youth. And for *every* American, young and old, adequate health care must become a right—not a luxury.

We, the members of NEA, are hardly strangers to the initiatives championed at the summit. We're pioneers in the field of site-based decision making. We're veteran lobbyists for programs like Head Start. We're the people who make Chapter 1 work.

All of this suggests that if the momentum generated by the education summit is not to stall, we must gear up for action. We must seize this moment of special opportunity.

We can best begin by amending one of the recommendations that emerged from the summit. President Bush and the governors gave their stamp of approval to site-based school management. That's a goal we in NEA have advocated for years.

But now that we are nearing that goal, we ought to make it clear that school-based management is not an end in itself. Rather, it's a stepping-stone to a greater goal. The goal of *site-based management* is *community-centered education.*

We've got to drive that message home. Throughout this great land, we must begin—right now—to work through our local Associations to forge community-wide alliances for educational progress. We must reach out with new vigor to parents, business leaders, the clergy, health professionals—*to all our neighbors*—and invite them to help us improve our schools.

I'd like to see us begin today to make every school a true community center. The citizens in our communities need—and deserve—the chance to voice their concerns and offer their counsel to school staff. And America needs to reclaim the ideal President John Adams spoke of nearly 200 years ago. "The whole people," said Adams, "must take responsibility for the education of the whole people."

**The goal of our outreach efforts** is nothing less than the "re-democratization" of American education. If we succeed in this venture, I'm convinced we can lift American education to new heights—to the very summit of excellence.

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Bob Riha, Jr.


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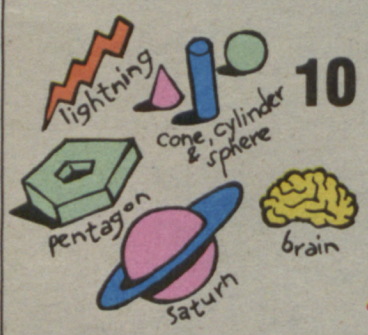
UCLA writing teacher Mike Rose can reach the unsuccessful and the underprepared. He was both until a teacher put him on the track to eventual success.

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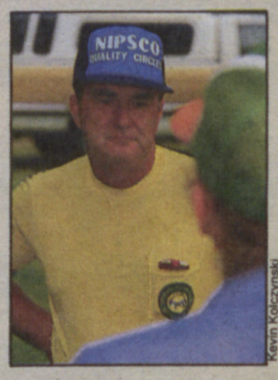
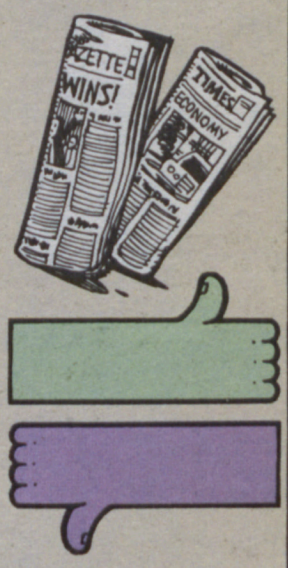


Kevin Kolczynski

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Critics of college use of the Scholastic Aptitude Test to judge applicants are becoming increasingly vocal. But proponents of the SAT say, "Let's not rush to judgment." A debate.


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NATIONAL NEWS

Joe Di Dio

Joe Di Dio

*The September education summit brought the President and the nation's governors to Thomas Jefferson's historic University of Virginia. Media swarmed over the university grounds throughout the two-day affair, and reporters targeted many of their questions at NEA President Keith Geiger (above inset). Geiger welcomed the summit results, but noted that "now we all have to do our homework, and everybody has an assignment."*

WHAT NEXT?

# AFTER THE SUMMIT

**September's landmark education summit between President Bush and the nation's governors produced far more than rhetoric. The specific agreements reached at Charlottesville could, if followed through, make a real difference in America's schools.**

Who would have thought it possible? The President of the United States. The nation's governors. All together for two days with only one topic on the agenda: education.

But that's exactly what did happen at the end of September as the nation's top political leaders met in Charlottesville, Va., for an historic, first-ever "education summit."

Over the two summit days, those top political leaders spent hours in closed-door meetings. They emerged with a five-page joint statement.

The statement offered no single, flashy new initiative, and that fact left some media commentators disappointed.

But the educators on hand at Charlottesville quickly saw the joint statement's significance. The statement puts into motion a process that could produce the first-ever meaningful annual accountability standards for U.S. education. (*See box below.*)

The summit also produced other surprises. President Bush acknowledged that the federal government needs to play a leading role in making sure that children make it to the schoolhouse door ready and able to learn.

And from the governors, the summit produced a consensus that schools need to be restructured at the grassroots level, not by statewide mandates.

But it's what the summit did not trumpet that's almost as important as what it did. Nowhere in the summit joint statement is there any clarion call for the various education reform panaceas that have surfaced over recent years. The summit, in short, addressed real, not phony, issues.

And credit for that must go to NEA activists who worked hard, *before* the summit began, to set the right tone.

In most states, for instance, NEA state affiliate presidents sat down with their governors and presented a NEA perspective on the challenges facing education.

In Washington, D.C., meanwhile, NEA President Keith Geiger and other education leaders met with President Bush in a pre-summit White House meeting.

"It's clear from the summit," notes NEA President Geiger, "that the governors and the President heard what we had to say."

The governors will now be moving to involve representatives from throughout education in a process that defines specific educational goals for America.

## A National Report Card for Education?

Is education reform working? No one really knows. There are no accepted standards to measure if America's schools are improving.

But all that might change if the agreements set at the summit are fully implemented. The governors and President Bush agreed to work together to help establish national goals in at least seven specific educational areas—and then, once those goals are set, to report annually on progress toward achieving those goals.

Those goals will help Americans assess how well the nation is doing on:

► helping children start school healthy and well-prepared.

► improving the performance of American students on international achievement tests, especially in math and science.

► reducing the dropout rate and improving academic performance, especially of at-risk students.

► achieving functional literacy for all adult Americans.

► providing the training necessary to guarantee a competitive workforce.

► insuring America's schools a supply of qualified teachers and up-to-date technology.

► establishing safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools.

# News Beat

■ **That's Progress**—A new Harris poll done for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company shows America's teachers feel better about their profession and about themselves than they did five years ago. More teachers say they earn a reasonable salary (48 percent), are respected in their communities (53 percent), believe reform efforts are having a positive effect (53 percent), and would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching (66 percent).

■ **Leaner Lunches**—California recently became the first state to limit the amount of fat and cholesterol in school lunches. The new law requires the State Department of Education to set new guidelines for fat and cholesterol and to order substitutions, such as skim milk, margarine, and low-fat cheeses.

■ **Dropout Rates**—The 1988 high school dropout rate for Hispanic students is almost triple that of whites and more than double that of Blacks, according to a new report by the U.S. Department of Education. The rates: whites—12.6, Blacks—14.8, and Hispanics—35.7. Overall, about 13 percent of the nation's 10th through 12th graders—over four million teens—dropped out last year.

■ **Income Gap**—The pay gap between male high school and college graduates has more than tripled since the early 1970s, according to a University of Maryland economist. In 1973, a 30-year-old college graduate earned 16 percent more than a 30-year-old high school graduate. Today, due to the loss of high-paying maufacturing jobs, the income gap is a whopping 50 percent.

■ **New Hat**—NEA past president Mary Hatwood Futrell recently became a senior fellow and associate director of the George Washington Center for the Study of Education and National Development. The Center conducts research and develops policy initiatives on major national education issues. Futrell will also teach education courses.

## WELL PUT!

**"I offer a challenge to every teacher, school administrator, school board member, and parent to get our children excited about learning."**

*—Rose Mofford*
*Governor of Arizona*

COVER STORY

# Where Does

***School-based clinics offer comprehensive health care to students at a critical time in their lives—adolescence—in a critical place—school.***

With the exception of a rather elegant white clock tower, Roosevelt High School is an ordinary red brick building in a quiet residential neighborhood. Some families have lived in the surrounding St. Johns area of North Portland, Oregon, for generations, working in the mills and shipyards, raising kids.

At the tip of a peninsula bordered by the Columbia River, the Willamette River, and the freeway, St. Johns is 25 minutes—and, in some ways, a million miles—from the high rises of downtown Portland.

Some ways, but not all ways. Despite its small-town atmosphere, the North Portland community has big-city problems—unemployment, drugs, crime, gang violence. Roosevelt's 1,000 students—75 percent white, one-third transient—are growing up too fast.

Four years ago, the Multnomah County Health Department provided funding, and Roosevelt donated its textbook storage room, for the area's first school-based health clinic.

Part Marcus Welby country clinic, part M*A*S*H emergency room, the clinic's been handling everything from headaches and acne to depression and AIDS. About three-quarters of the school's students use the clinic; for half of them, it's the only source of health care.

The clinic's four staff members—a public health nurse/coordinator, a nurse practitioner, a mental health counselor, and a health service technician—have their hands full. On just one day recently, they did several sports physicals, treated skin rashes, stomachaches, and sprained fingers, gave a DPT shot, tested for tuberculosis and pregnancy, checked weight and blood pressure, made appointments for dozens of students, helped a young couple make a decision about contraception, counseled troubled teens and parents calling on the phone, handled a potential case of child abuse and a near case of teen suicide.

"*Need,*" says clinic nurse practitioner Judy Fisher. "That's the word that got us here."

*For Kelly (cover photo and right), pain was an everyday thing. As a child, she was sexually abused by a neighbor. Later, her parents divorced; her lifelong friends turned to gangs. At 12, she started drinking, smoking pot, and dropping acid. By 15, she was dealing to gang members, witnessing occasional street shootings, living with friends, and flunking out of school.*

*"I was selling pot, acid, crank, crack, coke—anything—and making $400 or $500 a week. I just thought it was okay to do it, it was fun, I could do it for the rest of my life." Then one friend nearly killed another, and fear for her own life led Kelly to the Roosevelt Teen Health Clinic.*

*Clinic staff convinced Kelly to talk to her mother about what was going on, and—with her family's help—to get clean.*

***Clinic coordinator Sue Imbrie (right) confers with health service technician Billie Norick. And above center, nurse practitioner Judy Fisher checks a student's ear.***

"You hear teachers say, 'I want to teach, but I feel I'm the mother, father, nurse, social worker, counselor, police officer,'" says special education teacher Eileen Wende. "Now I can refer a student to the clinic without feeling like I'm putting the kid off. And," she adds, "I can continue teaching."

Wende, a Portland Association of Teachers activist, is a big fan of the teen clinic. "Before we had the clinic, I was always looking for outside agencies to help kids. Now it's a lot easier and faster with the clinic here to coordinate services."

Art teacher Susan Theissen agrees. "The hardest part of my job is seeing the number of kids who are abused—emotionally, physically, sexually. Not a week goes by that I don't see it." Now, Theissen says, when she spots a possible case of abuse, she just picks up the phone and calls down to the clinic to report it. Clinic staff follow up from there.

Clinic staff work closely with school staff—the part-time school nurse, teachers (especially the health education teacher), coaches, counselors, and administrators—to help the students get in shape for learning and make everyone's work go as smoothly as possible.

"The clinic provides emotional support for us, it gets kids the help they so desperately need," says Theissen, "and it keeps me out of direct confrontations with students."

Health education teacher Linda Stechfield says clinic staff reinforce her curriculum. In addition to occasional classroom lectures by clinic staff, Stechfield says, "The kids are getting the same message in the clinic as they get in my classroom. On a day-to-day basis, we're always working together—whether we plan it or not."

Wende says the clinic's presence actually encourages teachers to get more involved in students' lives. "If we feel like we're getting in over our heads, we have a place to turn," she says. "I think we're more willing to help when we know we don't have to know it all."

*Mike's family moved from New Mexico to North Portland mid-year. With all the changes in his life, Mike—a junior—wanted to keep one thing constant: wrestling. But without a medical okay, he couldn't go out for the team. His parents had no health insurance and a lot of other things on their minds. Mike got the physical he needed at the clinic.*

"The clinic is making athletics more available to any student who wants to participate," says Timi Elwood, one of two athletic directors. "Money's no longer a factor."

In addition, sports physicals are a way for clinic staff to flag dangerous behaviors and physical problems. Clinic

COVER STORY

# It Hurt?

Photographs by C. William B. Miller

staffer Judy Fisher gives students more than just a quick once-over. In the hour-long exam, she checks the obvious—eyes, ears, heart, lungs, spine, knees—and the not-so-obvious—drug and alcohol patterns, sexual histories, and mental health concerns. She even asks the kids if they wear seat belts.

Those with problems make follow-up appointments. After one recent physical, Fisher shook her head. "His molars are completely rotted out," she says. "I don't think he's ever seen a dentist."

*Last year, health clinic staff diagnosed and treated Monica's gonorrhea. Although sexually active, Monica had not been using birth control or protecting herself against disease. After a long discussion with clinic staff, Monica chose to begin taking birth-control pills. The school clinic wrote her a prescription and now checks with her regularly to make sure she's doing okay. This year—with facts, support, and free bus tickets from clinic staff—Monica's decided to go to a downtown clinic for a blood test. She's worried about AIDS.*

***Association activist Eileen Wende says, "It's a definite relief for teachers to have the clinic as backup."***

Before the school clinic opened, some anti-abortion activists handed out pictures of aborted fetuses to students on school grounds. They claimed the clinic would become an "abortion mill" and encourage promiscuity. Their views were heard, but—in light of a high teen pregnancy rate and the threat of AIDS—voted down.

Clinic staff neither dispense birth-control devices nor counsel for—or perform—abortions.

"We feel that reproductive health care should be treated the same way as any other health care," says public health nurse and clinic coordinator Sue Imbrie. "What kind of message would we be giving to students if we ignored those parts of their bodies?

"Virtually no students come in here for birth control that haven't had sex already," she laments. "I wish the opposite were true, but kids are coming in here for pregnancy tests before they've ever come in for family planning.

"Even so," Imbrie says, "I have a lot of respect for these kids. We have to stop telling them what to do and teach them instead that they really do have choices."

***Mental health counselor Hazel McCubbin does counseling, plays a key role in crisis intervention, and helps coordinate mental health services.***

*One night Marsha took a razor blade and slashed her left wrist. When she came to school the next day, she talked to Charlotte Lezcano—her counselor and "friend"—about the suicide attempt. Lezcano immediately called clinic staff, since she knew they'd been treating Marsha for depression. Lezcano and the clinic nurse met with Marsha, and the three together developed a plan of action.*

"The number of suicide attempts among these students is staggering," says clinic mental health consultant Hazel McCubbin. The most common problem among her clients: depression.

"Adolescents have trouble concentrating in the best of circumstances," she says. "How can they concentrate on learning when mom's on crack, the electricity's been turned off, and there's no food in the refrigerator?"

*Kelly's mom, Julie, looks comfortable sitting in the Teen Clinic. She's been here before, talking with staff about her daughter's treatment for drug addiction. Now she's talking about Kelly's recovery.*

*"It took a place like this for Kelly to feel comfortable enough to come for help. They were able to steer her back home when she had no one else," Julie says, looking down at her hands. She sighs. "This place has been a godsend."*

**Editor's note:** Most of the students' names have been changed to protect their privacy.

*—Stefanie Weiss*

## School-Based Clinics: A National View

The number of school-based clinics offering comprehensive health services to public school students has risen dramatically over the past two decades—from 1 in 1970 to at least 150 in 1988.

School-based health clinics are located in 30 states, primarily in urban areas. According to the Center for Population Options' (CPO) Support Center for School-Based Clinics, over half the students using school-based clinics have no other source of primary health care. One-third have no health insurance.

National attention paid to school-based clinics in the early '80s focused mainly on local controversies over dispensing contraceptives. The fact is less than half of all clinics prescribe birth control methods, and only 15 percent dispense them. None perform abortions. Parental consent for students to use the clinic is required in most places.

In most communities, controversy over clinic openings ended quickly when parents and community members saw the wide range of needed services clinics were providing. Nearly all clinics do physical exams, perform lab tests, diagnose and treat minor injuries, provide health education and mental health counseling, and offer assessments and referrals to community health care systems.

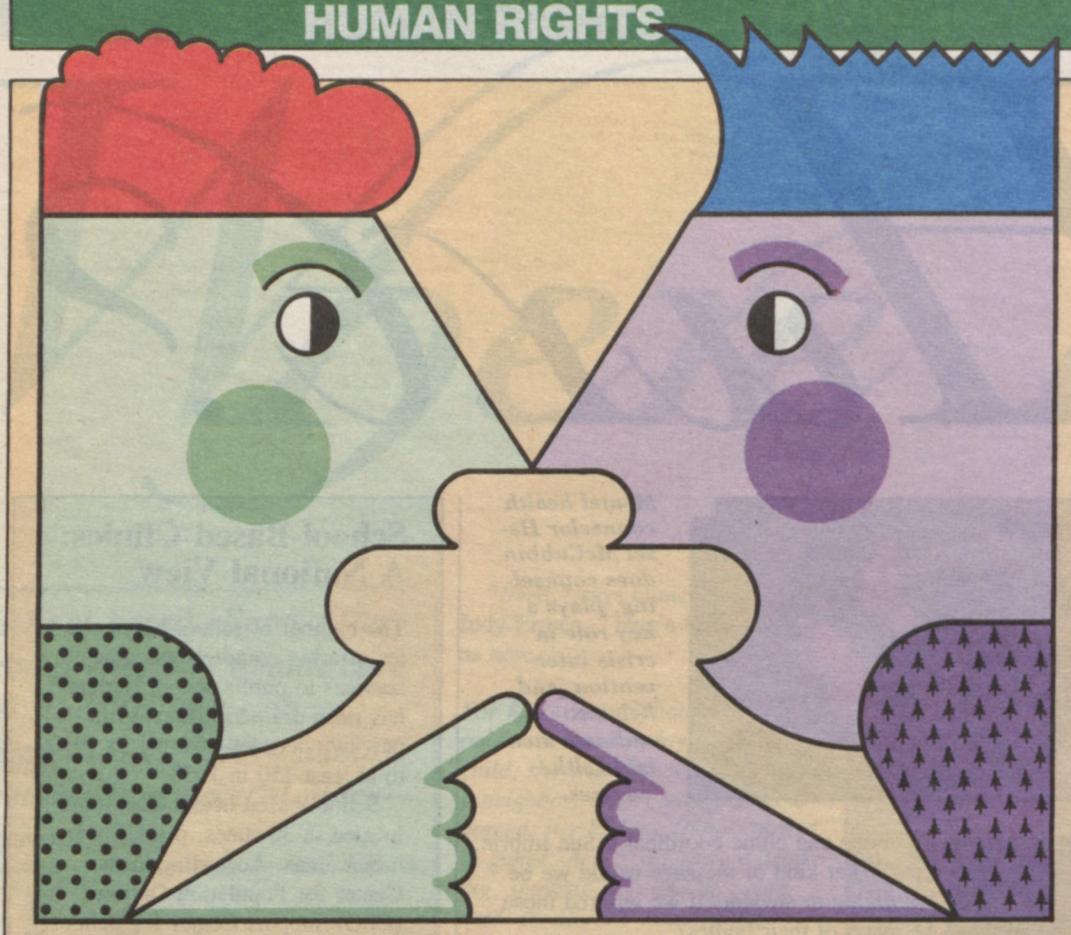
CPO estimates that the typical school-based clinic serving a school with about 1,500 students costs $165,000 a year to operate—although many run for less. Funding sources may include county and state governments, private foundations like the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in Princeton, N.J., and federal maternal and child health block grants.

The delegates to the 1988 NEA Representative Assembly strengthened the Association's position on student health, calling for "comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics."

Dozens of Association locals—from Portland, Oregon, to Camden, N.J., to Alum Rock, Calif.—have been active in establishing or supporting clinics in their schools.

*—S.W.*

## HUMAN RIGHTS



# "Sticks and Stones Can Break My Bones..."

**Words can really hurt too. That's why school employees need to stop name-calling before it gets out of hand.**

"Name-calling hurts students more than we realize," says Jackie Gilmore, assistant principal of McCracken Junior High School in Spartanburg, S.C., and co-chair of the NEA Minority Affairs Committee.

"School employees should try to prevent name-calling by bolstering students' self-esteem. If they feel good about themselves and one another, they won't feel a need to tear each other down."

Name-calling can show up in any school, no matter what kind of youngsters make up the student body. You can hear students insulting each other in white, minority, and multicultural schools; in inner-city, rural, and suburban schools; in public and private, rich and poor schools.

The insults vary according to region and even according to school, but some turn up nationwide. It's not unusual to hear kids of all ethnicities use derogatory words for American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians/Pacific Islanders, Blacks, and Hispanics; for students who speak accented English; for Jews; for heavy students; for slow students, and for gays.

How can we stop the name-calling?

► Gilmore advises school employees to give students the same respect, protection, and supervision they'd give their own children. They should also teach students to associate positive words with ethnic groups. Black, for example, is a color of wealth: oil is black, and so is ebony.

► Puerto Rican teacher and NEA member Awilda Saldaña of Republica de Columbia School in Rio Piedras suggests that teachers turn name-calling incidents into positive classroom dialogues.

Ask the perpetrators to imagine how the victim feels, Saldaña suggests. How would they feel if the situation were reversed? And why did they use a particular name? Where did they hear it first? Do they know what it means? What is the feeling behind the name? Teachers should then support the victim by talking about his or her good points and the contributions of his or her ethnic group.

► Oklahoma college professor Carl Downing, of Central State University in Edmond, advises teachers to be aware of how onlooking students are reacting to name-calling. Some quietly endure the action, some protest it, some ignore it, some blame the victim, and some try to "get even" by doing some name-calling themselves. No matter what their reaction, says Downing, most students need a teacher's reassurance and support.

No matter who's the perpetrator and who's the victim, concludes Illinois math teacher Rob Johan of O'Neill Junior High School in Woodridge, name-calling requires a decisive response. Says Johan, who co-chairs the NEA Minority Affairs Committee with Gilmore: "Teachers should consider name-calling a direct expression of prejudice that can't be ignored."

Motivational consultant Pat McCallum of Chevy Chase, Md., offers a couple of suggestions for combatting name-calling.

► Ask each student in the class to select a positive adjective that begins with the first letter of his or her first name. Write that name on a card, place the card on the child's desk, and make a practice of calling the child by that name (e.g., "Generous George," "Resourceful Raul").

► Ask students to select someone from their ethnic group who has contributed to history, literature, math, or science, and whom they admire. Then ask them to write down two qualities that person possesses. Finally, ask them to list two things they themselves have done that show those qualities.

NEA Human and Civil Rights is interested in hearing how you deal with student name-calling. Please send your responses to NEA HCR, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

*—Mary Faber*
*NEA Human and Civil Rights*

## WASHINGTON WATCH

# Shunning the "M" Word

Today, in our nation's capital, there's not much respect for the "m" word. In these times of deficits, more and more public officials seem to think that to every problem there's a solution—a solution that doesn't require the expenditure of any money.

To some extent, of course, that's true. Many problems can be solved by redirecting existing resources. But not all.

In education, the situation is stark and simple. There are several federally financed education programs that have a proven track record of success. Yet these programs are reaching only a fraction of the children they were enacted to help.

The difference: the "m" word.

Example number one: Head Start. This federal program has been winning kudos at the community level for over two decades. And, at a time when hunger and homelessness run rampant, the goal of the Head Start program—making sure all youngsters are ready and able to start school—has never seemed more important.

Despite this importance, Head Start has never been funded fully enough to reach more than 20 percent of the disadvantaged preschool youngsters eligible for Head Start help.

Serving all the children eligible for Head Start would require an investment $6.3 billion greater than current spending levels.

Example number two: Chapter 1. Created originally in 1965, Chapter 1 compensatory programs funnel grants to local school districts for reading and math programs targeted at disadvantaged students.

Study after study has demonstrated the overall effectiveness of Chapter 1. Dollar for dollar, Chapter 1 expenditures are an outstanding investment. Unfortunately, there have been too few dollars.

The number of students served by Chapter 1 fell from 7 million back at the start of the '80s decade to 5.7 million last year.

Those children eligible for Chapter 1 services, meanwhile, now total 8.5 million. To reach all these children, the federal government would have to increase spending by $2.3 billion.

But the total number of childen living in poverty is even greater than the number of children currently eligible for Chapter 1. If Chapter 1 services were extended to all 12 million children now living in poverty, the added cost would be $9.7 billion.

Next time anyone tells you we don't need any more money to solve education's problems, just think about Head Start and Chapter 1 and all those millions of kids denied the help they so desperately need.

# Local Look

## ILLINOIS

**It's been a three-ring circus** in Elgin for the past six months. The 2,100 members of NEA's four local affiliates there have been busy—and successful—defending against a barrage of union-busting tactics, including two attempts to contract out support work and one "assault" on the teachers' contract.

Last spring, district officials announced plans to lay off 85 custodians and subcontract their work. Working together, the teachers, secretaries, bus drivers, and custodial, grounds, and maintenance employees organized community support against the proposal.

In bargaining, the Education Support Services Association suggested the district maintain all current positions with no pay cuts or loss of benefits and add 22 additional night custodians at entry-level salaries. Since the second wage level brought total costs down, the district agreed.

At the same time, the district threatened to cut 54 clerical aide jobs and forced a 13-day teachers' strike over proposed take-backs that Elgin Teachers Association President Scott Eshelman characterized as "denigrating and unprofessional."

In both cases, unity—and tough bargaining—paid off. The clerical aides' jobs were saved, and the teachers settled a satisfactory two-year contract.

## MONTANA

**The 723 teachers in Great** Falls were fed up: Since 1981, they'd been agreeing to reduced health benefits, salary freezes, and low pay adjustments. Now it was their turn to be heard.

But the board wouldn't listen, so the teachers voted to walk the line—and 95 percent did just that for 29 days recently before reaching contract agreement.

"Teachers were fully involved in the negotiation process from the outset," says Great Falls Education Association President Gene Lemelin. "They take responsiblity for their actions—and also for the significantly successful settlement."

Among teacher gains: a total budget increase of 5.6 percent in teacher salaries this year and 6.0 percent next; creation of a sick leave bank; more rapid advancement on the salary schedule; an increased monetary base for those who retire after 25 years; agreement by the board to abide by stricter state "education excellence" class-size limit guidelines as they're implemented over the next five years; and an increase in the professional leave fund from $15,000 to $25,000.

## UTAH TEACHERS SEND A MESSAGE

Royce Bair

*Some 8,000 people rallied in a Salt Lake City park the day of Utah's one-day teacher walkout. Here, Davis Education Association rep Corine Sayler addresses the crowd, flanked by UEA President Jim Campbell (seated, left) and UEA Executive Director Lowell Baum (standing).*

### Davis Local Starts Statewide Walkout

The Utah legislature's decision to cut taxes instead of putting money into education didn't wash with members of the Davis Education Association. Or as it turned out, with local Association members anywhere in Utah.

"The legislature had promised that when times got better, they'd increase education funding," says UEA President Jim Campbell. But instead, in a special fall session, the lawmakers dealt with a $94 million budget surplus by voting $38 million in tax cuts.

"We heard about the tax reduction at school," says Corine Sayler, a biology teacher and Association rep at Davis High School outside Salt Lake City. "Our faculty is strong-minded, and people couldn't accept the fact that the legislature—by voting the cuts—had ignored education," she continues. "We decided to vote on a job action the next morning."

The next morning the Davis High School faculty did vote for an immediate walkout. They had support from Campbell and others at UEA, but no reason to think theirs would be anything but an isolated action.

That turned out not to be the case. The Davis High School walkout touched off a sequence of events that ended the following Monday with a statewide teacher walkout—authorized by a unanimous vote of UEA's Council of Local Presidents to close the schools for a day.

The aftermath of that day: "The governor and legislators are talking about education, when just a week before they were talking about tax cuts," says Jim Campbell.

And a newspaper poll found that 71 percent of Utahns supported the walkout; while 78 percent said they'd give their own portion of the tax cuts to public education.

## PENNSYLVANIA

**What's it like to get a real** salary schedule after two decades of merit pay? Association members in Kennett Square, Pa., can tell you—it's great.

The district's merit pay system, set up in the 1950s, was based some years on a flat dollar figure, some years on a percentage of the teacher's salary. The criteria for the increases were never precise, and the increases were permanent, not just for one year.

"The system promoted jealousy and dissension, and it was a perennial sore spot in bargaining," says Mike Kelly, chief negotiator for the Kennett Education Association. "And it actually had a bad effect on instructional quality, because evaluations were judgmental rather than diagnostic."

Last spring district negotiators agreed: a regular salary schedule based on education and experience would be a suitable part of the district's excellence campaign.

Teachers got an across-the-board raise of $5,300, in addition to the amount required to place them on the proper step of the schedule.

## OHIO

**When parents, business, and** community leaders in central Ohio want to know what's happening in education, they don't pick up the daily newspaper, they look for the latest copy of *Teacher Community Connection*, a monthly newsletter published by the Southwestern Ohio Education Association.

Now in its third year, the newsletter serves as a pipeline to community members, giving details on school events and community involvement opportunities and definitions of educational jargon. Sheila Fagan, the newsletter's editor, says she sends tip sheets to Association reps in the district's 26 schools to find local stories. This way, every school has a chance to promote its programs.

"The responses we get from the community are excellent," says Fagan. "We are expanding our role there, and the community is eager to join us in the educational process."

To that end, the entire community is participating in the November 16 Back to School Day, when community leaders replace educators, an event announced in the *Connection*.

## LOUISIANA

**This fall 34 new teachers** started teaching in St. John the Baptist parish, lured to the school district by a special package of incentives endorsed by the St. John Association of Educators (SJAE).

The newly hired certified teachers received a $2,000 stipend for living expenses, housing and rental discounts, free appliances, free banking, reduced real estate brokerage commissions, and reduced automobile costs.

The inducement package, spearheaded by the local Economic Development Committee, was put together under the auspices of the Citizens for Education Excellence. The group was concerned about the growing teacher shortage and the resulting increase in noncertified teachers (up by one-third in two years.)

In concert with the inducement package, SJAE is working to help the new teachers appreciate living and working in the parish. "We're inviting these teachers personally to come to our meetings so they'll understand the workings of our school system and our newly won contract," says SJAE President Elton Oubre.

# State Side

## NORTHEAST

**When Rhode Island teachers** move to another state, they can now take their accrued retirement benefits with them—as long as the other state has a reciprocal pension portability agreement with Rhode Island.

That recently-enacted legislative provision makes Rhode Island unique and a leader among states. The catch: the new law's promise can't be carried out until at least one other state makes a reciprocal agreement.

"We've got the system up and running," notes NEA-Rhode Island President Harvey Press. NEA-RI legislative savvy was a major force in bringing the pension portability law to enactment. "We just need someone to match up with us."

## MIDWEST

**Minnesota Education Associ**ation members are taking responsibility for the future of their profession. At a five-day Student Leadership Symposium they sponsored this summer, experienced teachers gave about 100 high school seniors and recent graduates a real sense of what it's like to be a teacher.

The purpose: to encourage bright young people to consider education as a career choice. By the mid-1990s, MEA estimates, about half of the current Minnesota teaching population will leave the profession. And they'll need to be replaced.

Says MEA President Bob Astrup, "We wanted to make sure our chosen profession—teaching—continues to attract gifted practitioners. By all accounts, we succeeded."

## SOUTHEAST

**Associations in two areas of** the Southeast ravaged by Hurricane Hugo have initiated funds to assist victims. The Asociacion de Maestros de Puerto Rico, estimating that some 500 teachers lost their homes in the storm, set up an emergency $100,000 in aid. But Hugo's devastation caused AMPR officials to reach out to other state Associations.

"To help our educators begin to rebuild, we've set a goal of raising a million dollars," says Jose Eligio Velez, AMPR president. Contributions may be sent to AMPR Disaster Assistance, c/o Nancy Bosch, Executive Director, AMPR, Box 1088, Hato Rey PR 00919.

The South Carolina Education Association has set up a fund to buy school supplies for students in seven counties devastated by the hurricane.

"Once their lives get back to normal, the children in these counties will need basic school supplies to continue their education," explains SCEA President Sheila Gallagher. Send contributions to The SCEA Children's Fund, 421 Zimalcrest Dr., Columbia, SC 29210.

## KID COUNT

### Youth's Population Share Keeps Falling

California has the most kids (7.5 million); Wyoming and Vermont the fewest (141,000 each). Overall, though, the nation's 64 million kids today account for just 26 percent of the entire U.S. population of 246 million—nowhere near the 36 percent they represented in 1960.

And that downward trend's likely to continue, with the kids' share of the population declining to about 21 percent by the year 2020.

The latest figures from the Census Bureau show 18.5 million kids under the age of 5 and 45 million kids ages 5 to 17.

| State | Under 5 Years | 5-17 Years | State | Under 5 Years | 5-17 Years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (in thousands) | | | (in thousands) | |
| Alabama | 296 | 819 | Missouri | 370 | 942 |
| Alaska | 57 | 110 | Montana | 62 | 159 |
| Arizona | 299 | 653 | Nebraska | 120 | 303 |
| Arkansas | 173 | 476 | Nevada | 82 | 184 |
| California | 2,381 | 5,113 | New Hampshire | 81 | 194 |
| Colorado | 264 | 605 | New Jersey | 529 | 1,302 |
| Connecticut | 222 | 538 | New Mexico | 134 | 315 |
| Delaware | 48 | 118 | New York | 1,275 | 3,081 |
| District of Columbia | 47 | 91 | North Carolina | 449 | 1,187 |
| Florida | 848 | 1,947 | North Dakota | 52 | 131 |
| Georgia | 496 | 1,280 | Ohio | 774 | 2,049 |
| Hawaii | 89 | 198 | Oklahoma | 247 | 635 |
| Idaho | 81 | 223 | Oregon | 190 | 496 |
| Illinois | 859 | 2,144 | Pennsylvania | 791 | 2,057 |
| Indiana | 389 | 1,072 | Rhode Island | 66 | 164 |
| Iowa | 191 | 523 | South Carolina | 259 | 690 |
| Kansas | 191 | 462 | South Dakota | 57 | 140 |
| Kentucky | 253 | 728 | Tennessee | 332 | 921 |
| Louisiana | 372 | 924 | Texas | 1,488 | 3,498 |
| Maine | 84 | 220 | Utah | 177 | 452 |
| Maryland | 346 | 801 | Vermont | 40 | 101 |
| Massachusetts | 400 | 932 | Virginia | 430 | 1,040 |
| Michigan | 677 | 1,776 | Washington | 348 | 842 |
| Minnesota | 325 | 795 | West Virginia | 113 | 364 |
| Mississippi | 206 | 574 | Wisconsin | 357 | 916 |
| | | | Wyoming | 39 | 102 |

## PACIFIC

**The 52,000-member Wash**ington Education Association is working with some 130 civic, business, labor, religious, and health organizations for the passage of Initiative 102—the "Children's Initiative"—which will be on the state's November ballot.

The measure would provide $720 million for children over the next two years, half of which would go to education for such purposes as reducing class size and funding programs for at-risk students.

WEA members are working in a number of ways to help get out the vote: speaking to community groups, serving as building contacts to coordinate electioneering efforts, and phoning, writing, and leafleting the public.

## MID-ATLANTIC

**"In less time than it takes to** eat an apple, you can ask your child about school."

That message and others in Vietnamese, Korean, Cambodian (Khmer), Spanish or English, convey the thought of the Virginia Education Association: now is the time for parents to get involved in their child's education.

As part of VEA's statewide community relations campaign, these multilingual messages appear on bus cards, posters, and brochures.

VEA's campaign is also receiving help from businesses, churches, and hotels. Shopping malls used VEA's message in their back-to-school ads. Participating churches carry the tailor-made message, "In less time than it takes to sing a hymn," and hotel brochures offer parents suggestions for their return home.

## WEST

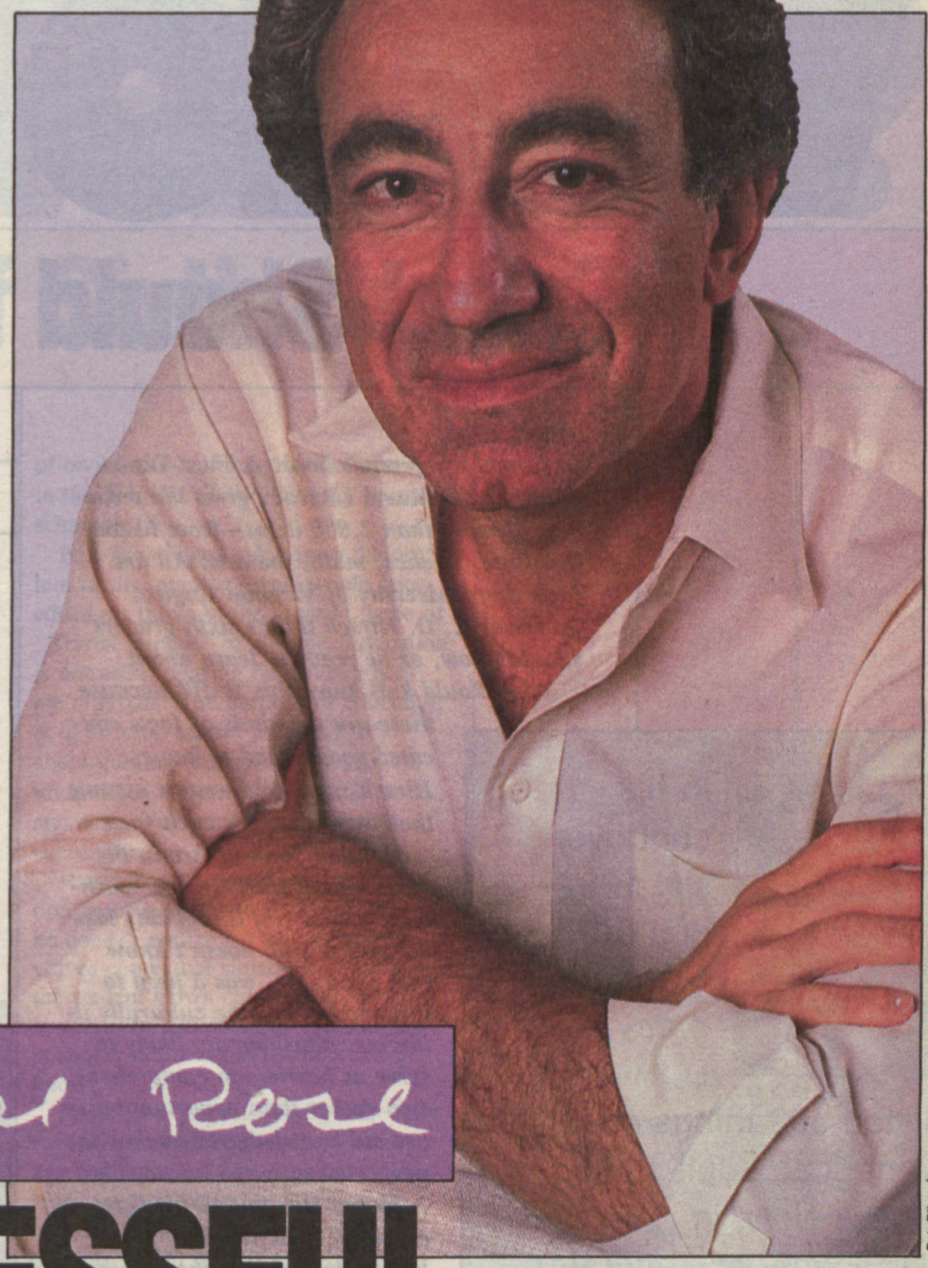
**A 20-year fight in both fed**eral and state courts finally culminated in a decision last month that the Texas system of school funding is unconstitutional. The Texas supreme court ruled that the huge disparities in per capita funding between school districts violates the Texas constitution's mandate for an "efficient" educational system. The decision gives the state legislature until May 1, 1990, to come up with a more equitable system.

In applauding the ruling, TSTA President Ollie Besteiro said: "history will mark this day as the opening of the door to opportunity for children who have been the victims of a geographical roll of the dice."

# Meet:

# TEACHER OF THE UNSUCCESSFUL

mike Rose



Bob Riha, Jr.

***Today Mike Rose is a writer, poet, and teacher. But as a schoolboy in Los Angeles, Rose almost missed out on becoming what he calls critically literate—able to comprehend and respond to meaning and patterns in "serious" writing. Now, as associate director of UCLA Writing Programs, Rose is himself a mentor to undergraduates underprepared for the writing demands of a major research university.***

***This year Rose's book,* Lives on the Boundary: The Struggles and Achievements of America's Underprepared *(Free Press, 255 pp., $22.95) won the National Council of Teachers of English David Russell Award. Recently Rose discussed the book and other matters of literacy with* NEA Today *staff writer Nancy Needham.***

**How well are we teaching reading—especially the "remedial" kind?**
We can do better. The programs and curriculum we've devised for people—kids and adults—who don't do well in school have all been plagued with the same problems.

First, the assumption that poor writers and readers have to have their work broken down into pieces—into "skills and drills." This doesn't develop critical literacy, which involves talking and writing about reading.

Second, we have a tendency to leap from evidence of poor performance on a test to the inference that somebody has a deficit in linguistic or cognitive function.

We need to see that the so-called "deficits" are really the result of a lack of a certain kind of experience, and that experience is something education can provide.

**An English teacher provided such experience to you in high school?**
Yes, a new teacher brought a tough "prep school" curriculum to my school. He made us read difficult material and write about it. We knew he was the real thing because he spent so much time on our papers.

Before that experience, I was like many kids from families that don't know what to expect of school: I tuned out. My parents were immigrants, who hadn't even gone to high school. Neither they nor I realized I was not learning things—like math—that school success depended on. Or that something was amiss when I was put in a noncollege track in high school. This happens all too often with kids from immigrant and working-class backgrounds.

**What can high schools do to make kids critically literate?**
Assuming reasonable course loads, access to colleagues, support—there are things high school teachers can do and are doing.

They can create writing assignments that try to move students beyond mere personal response to literature to more and more sophisticated cognitive tasks. For example, you can begin with students responding to a character, then provide them with a short accessible reading that offers a perspective—probably different from theirs, then have them apply or argue with that perspective.

**You write about teachers making a positive use of students' mistakes.**
Teachers can use Mina Shaughnessy's notion of the "logic of error" as an orientation to ask themselves—when a student is having trouble with an assignment—why is he or she doing this? If you assume human behavior is coherent, you can figure out what's behind the errors and build from there.

**You've been reluctant to have students write about personal matters.**
Because of my training in psychology and because I've been a counselor, I've had reservations about curricula that *force* a student back through his or her personal history, which then becomes the base of the curriculum. This can be invasive and volatile. When I taught writing to a group of Vietnam veterans, I never asked them to write about the war.

The same principle can apply when we try to get kids to write about being Black or Hispanic in America—particularly when we are white. You have to be very sensitive.

I think sometimes in our eagerness to make classrooms reflect the richness of our country—which is a very good thing—we forget how exploited these discussions have been in the past. We should set up situations as teachers where we discuss these things with people of color—other adults—that we know, to raise our own consciousness as we work on a multiethnic curriculum.

**You taught Vietnam veterans, worked on a suicide hot line—how did these jobs help you as a teacher?**
The vicissitudes of my search for meaningful work caused me to take up many kinds of work outside the traditional track. In hindsight, they helped me become a teacher of those who are not succeeding.

For teachers there is value in volunteer work of any kind—with alcoholics, drug abusers, the homeless—with populations who are significantly distressed. You get a remarkable understanding of human diversity and a whole set of tools to work with people in difficulty, despair, panic.

**You ended up with a classical education. Doesn't that make you pro-E. D. Hirsch? Pro "cultural literacy?"** [See "Who Is Joan of Arc," pp. 10-11.]
No. I would want to give teachers more latitude than his list does—to enrich the pool from which they can select.

Second, I would want an approach to cultural literacy that at its very core includes the kid's background—what he or she feels. Because if you're not considering that, the focus is always on the body of knowledge, not on the complex richness of human learning.

Hirsch's approach is not a teaching philosophy; it's a transmission philosophy. If the philosophy doesn't address teaching, it will be abused—by standardized tests or by a tendency to ignore the whole child. And it won't work.

**But you do care that kids learn the so-called "great poems?"**
I care about *entry*, about getting students to engage language. And I'll start anywhere—with anything from popular culture, for example. *Then* I would move them to more serious poems. Better yet, let's think of ways to use materials from our rich multiethnic culture.

There is powerful teaching when someone is versed in both the Great Books—the central repository of western ideas—and, for example, the multicultural list in the new Graywolf anthology [see "Free or Inexpensive," p. 28]. You've got to bring these lists into dramatic tension.

**What do you think of teaching as a profession?**
I was a public school teacher myself. I know teachers can perform a tremendous service, and teaching's a profession that can be filled with intellectual richness. I'm sorry it doesn't carry more status.

As I work with teachers, I hear about kids they lose as well as ones they've touched. Teaching is a powerful calling—providing a chance to do great good, but also the chance to do great harm, when it results in negative judgments about people's capacity. But it offers engagement, the possibility of influence, the chance to watch particular kinds of knowledge develop, to see how growth happens. What's more exciting than that?

*Lives on the Boundary* is also available from the NEA Professional Library Book Club, 230 Livingston St., Northvale, NJ 07647.

BOOK BEAT

# Who Is Joa

# And Should Every American Kid

In his controversial 1987 book *Cultural Literacy,* E. D. Hirsch listed 500 things every American adult should know. Now, in *A First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy,* Hirsch zeroes in on 2,000 things he thinks grade school kids should know. The controversy is as heated as ever. And surprise! Teachers don't necessarily agree with Hirsch—or with one another—about what it means to be literate.

***In format a reference book,* A First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy *gives the meanings of more than 2,000 items—from history, literature, science, math, the arts. All are facts that University of Virginia English professor E. D. Hirsch thinks sixth graders should know, or be ready to learn about.***

***Why should kids know this stuff? Because these are the kinds of facts educated people tend to know, Hirsch says. And writers assume their readers know such facts.***

***Mention Joan of Arc in the same breath with George Washington, and you'll probably lose the reader who doesn't know that Joan, too, was a hero to her nation. For the culturally illiterate, allusions are likely to serve as barriers to comprehension rather than opportunities to use old knowledge to anchor the new.***

***Hence Hirsch and his lists: an effort to define the "preknowledge" that makes it possible for people to learn from impersonal sources—textbooks, history books, lectures.***

***But not all educators see lists and think "great stuff." Some look at lists and think "abuse." (See, for example, a UCLA writing teacher's concerns in "Meet Mike Rose," on the preceding page.)***

***In the pieces that follow, five Association members who read* Cultural Literacy *and followed the ensuing debate react to the* First Dictionary. *Some thought they would like it and did not. Others found what they expected.***

***The debate is probably important: at the least its outcome will determine what you're talking about in your classroom—Hirsch's list, someone else's list, or topics more or less of your choice.***

***—Nancy R. Needham***

## Context, Context

If teaching skills isolated from any context is "wrongheaded," as E. D. Hirsch contends, then surely it is equally wrongheaded to teach unconnected, alphabetized bits of information. It is wrongheaded to present children with a book of phrases, names, dates, and places and advise them, as Hirsch does, to "find out what you still need to learn about a subject by looking through a particular section."

Reading the section entitled "Music, Art, and Architecture" won't help children "know" *Beethoven, Big Ben, blues, brass, Brooklyn Bridge.* Bits of information listed in alphabetical order are as meaningless isolated from context as are the skills in a workbook.

Hirsch calls this book a dictionary, and children are likely to place it on the shelf next to the *Webster's* and consult it when they have questions or need information.

With this particular dictionary, however, children have to need the right information, because this dictionary

Joe Di Dio

Joan Winchester Myers, reading teacher, George Washington Junior High School, Alexandria, Virginia

contains only items preselected as "What Children Need To Know."

A child who needs to know about "best-laid plans of mice and men" can find the information in the Proverbs section. But a child who looks in this dictionary for "burning the candle at both ends" or "burning your bridges behind you" will find only disappointment.

A student can find *Tinker Bell,* but not *Tiny Tim*; *Calcutta,* but not *Bombay; Times Square,* but not *Broadway; The Boston Tea Party,* but not *The Boston Massacre; Thomas Jefferson,* but not *John Adams.*

## Breeding Authoritarianism

Joe Di Dio

Janie Hydrick, third grade teacher, MacArthur School, Mesa, Arizona; chair, elementary section, National Council of Teachers of English

We don't need to encourage a "Trivial Pursuit" mentality. We don't need an arbitrary list that institutionalizes the marginalization of minority cultures.

The lessons of history are not in names, places, and dates, nor in the memorization of them, but in the study of underlying human conflicts. Conflicts that are not confronted and resolved by each succeeding generation will surface again and engage our children in arenas of continuing hostility and violence.

To define cultural literacy in terms of the ability to decode literary allusions is to turn a blind eye to those lessons. We need to define cultural literacy in terms of the skills and motivation to find a common ground for expression and in terms of the sharing of perspective and resolution of conflict.

A list assumes an authoritarian-passive model of the learning process—and of the political process. If kids are to be active, creative participants in learning and politics, they must embrace a model of cultural literacy in which the focus is on skills, motivation, and purpose. Human and civil rights are championed by one model, subverted by the other.

IN THE CLASSROOM

# AN OF ARC?

## Know by the End of Sixth Grade?

### *Whose* Culture?

Joe Di Dio

Jean Starr, English teacher, American Legion High School, Sacramento, California; author of *Tales from the Cherokee Hills,** traditional Indian stories retold

The skimpiness of material about women, Black people, Asian-Americans, American Indians, and Hispanic Americans in the *First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* is going to reinforce the belief of children raised in prejudice that people in these groups don't "belong" and are not worthy of respect and consideration.

From my own experience in school, I can testify that being "left out of the book" is extremely effective in lowering a child's self-esteem and self-confidence. The entries on American Indians in this text are not just annoyingly biased, they are both repugnant and dangerous. The message repeated over and over again: Indians are cruel, savage, vicious killers whose role in history was to attack innocent settlers.

What is it about the myths of ancient Greece that makes these stories inherently cultural and the myths of Eskimos, Bantus, and Samoans inherently noncultural? Could it be racial prejudice?

**$8.95 from John F. Blair, Publisher, 1406 Plaza Dr., Winston-Salem, NC 27103.*

### Facts That Refresh

Hirsch's books act as a tonic for the Reagan era's "ignorance-as-a-virtue" mentality. Hirsch reemphasizes equality in American education. He believes poor kids have as much need to know about *Helen of Troy, Thomas Jefferson,* and *floppy disk* as rich kids do. Having a common body of information can ease cultural and economic isolation by improving prospects for cross-cultural communication.

Hirsch reminds us that there's more to life than the vile and violent world portrayed in the media. Unfortunately, Hirsch's basic curriculum is in danger of being crowded out of our elementary schools by the need to teach about such things as drugs, sex, AIDS, protective behaviors, and suicide prevention. (There is some question as to whether a society forced to teach those kinds of subjects to its youngsters should, in fact, be transmitted at all.)

If anything, Hirsch doesn't go far enough in what he asks of elementary

Morry Gash

Glenn Schmidt, learning disabilities teacher, Northside Elementary School, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin

students. The culture in which our children are growing up is increasingly global. They'll have to deal with such innovations as foreign-owned businesses and factories, internationalized media, and the economic and cultural ramifications of a united Europe. Perhaps a sequel to this latest work will explore a more global cultural literacy.

I look forward to *The First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* on computer or interactive video disk so that the accumulated culture of the past can be more accessible to the culture of the future.

### Who Needs It?

To ask that children learn the definitions of the entries in *A First Dictionary* is to condemn schooling to a rite of rote and memorization. How can educators compress thousands of years of civilization and hundreds of entries in the *First Dictionary* into six years of schooling?

Hirsch's alleged solution to the problem of low reading levels would take educators down to the greatest game of "Trivial Pursuit" of all time. Education is not about pouring facts down people's throats. The purpose of education is to develop human potential. It's about guiding individuals to learn survival skills, to grasp intellectual tools and concepts in order to function and succeed in our society.

Hirsch is an alarmist, and the solution he offers is not a real one. What he doesn't realize is that learning involves contextual situations. That is, the student's own culture and the imperatives laid down by the nation's economy define what is important to know.

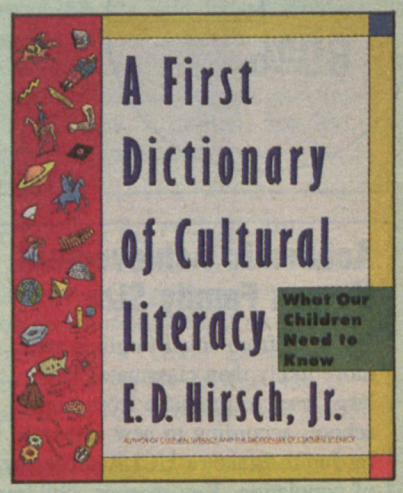
Radio, movies, television, nationally recognized products, business needs, and technological advances have done more to unify Americans and create a national identity than anything else in the post-World War II United States.

Which means American culture changes quickly. Yes, there are facts worth knowing, but few worth memorizing. Knowledge about many of the entries could be best obtained by reading a great work of literature, by

Joe Di Dio

Ernesto Silva-Valdivia, fourth-grade teacher, Euclid Avenue School, Los Angeles, California

viewing a great movie, by researching a topic interesting to the student, by meeting a challenge, or by engaging in a dialogue with parents or teachers. *A First Dictionary* would be a good addition to the reference section of a school library, but it should not be a guide for school reform.

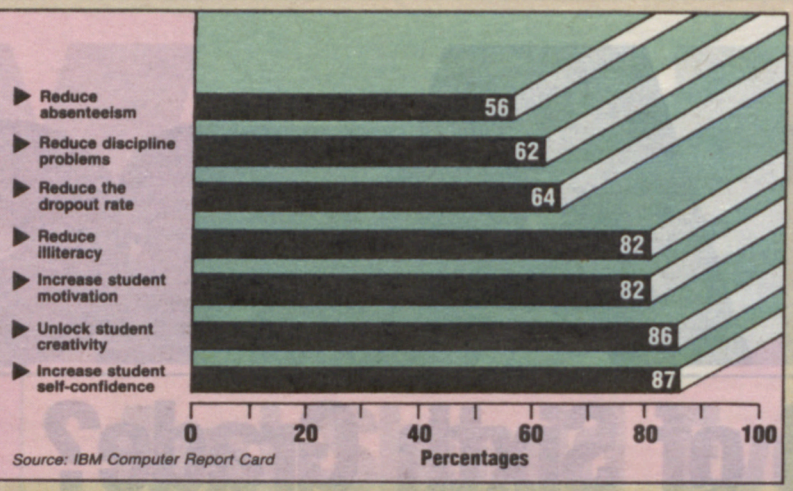



*A First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What Our Children Need To Know*
Edited by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.
Houghton Mifflin. 271 pp.
$14.95.

# DATA BANK

## Computer Potential

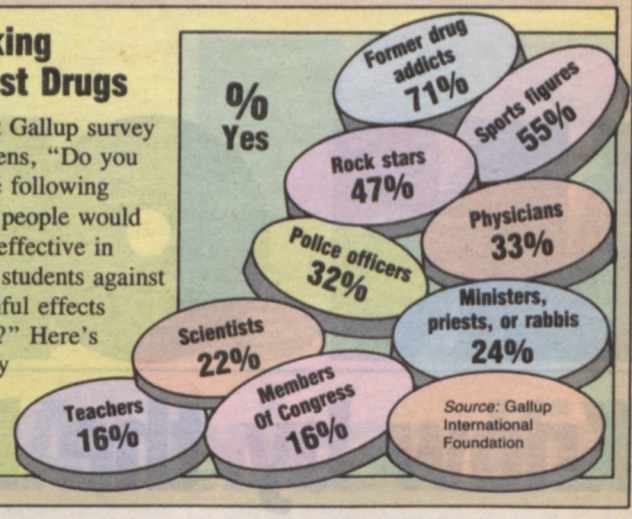
Teachers believe in the as-yet-untapped potential of computer use in the classroom, according to a recent survey. With enough equipment and enough training, teachers say—by the proportions indicated—they could use computers to—




Source: IBM Computer Report Card

## Speaking Against Drugs

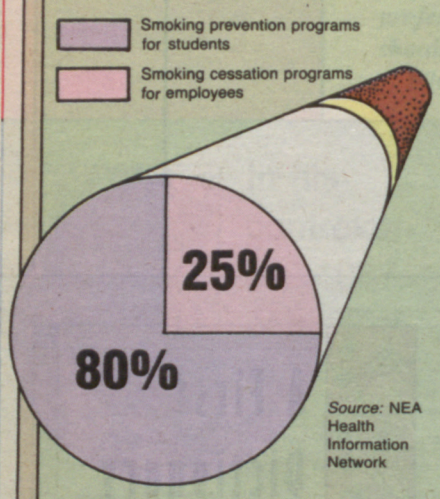
A recent Gallup survey asked teens, "Do you think the following types of people would be very effective in warning students against the harmful effects of drugs?" Here's what they said:




Source: Gallup International Foundation

## Mixed Messages

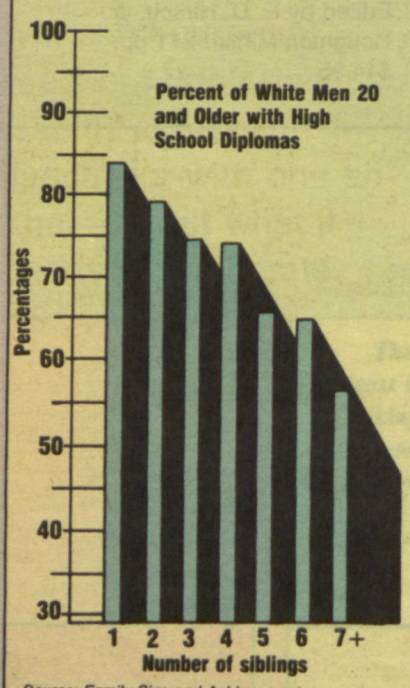
Making schools smoke-free will require schoolwide efforts affecting both students and employees—but a big disparity between programs for the two groups showed up in a recent survey of 584 school districts:




Source: NEA Health Information Network

## Academic Achievement Versus Family Size

Children from small families are more likely than classmates from large ones to graduate from high school, according to new research by Judith Blake, a UCLA professor of population. Key reasons: children from small families have better verbal skills at earlier ages and better self-images.




Source: Family Size and Achievement, University of California Press, 1989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# RESOURCES

## TV/Radio Tips

**Stolen Childhood**—*The Discovery Channel, Saturdays, Nov. 11-Dec. 16, 5-5:30 p.m., repeats Sundays, 1-1:30 p.m. ET.* All over the world children's basic human rights are being taken away. This six-part United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) series presents case studies on children's rights and calls attention to the 30th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (Nov. 20).

**Moyers: The Public Mind**—*PBS, Wednesdays, Nov. 8-29, 9-10 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* Why are politicians so successful at manipulating visual media? Why have pollsters become powerful shapers of public opinion? Host Bill Moyers explores "image and reality in America"—how public opinion is shaped by the mingling of fact and fiction in a world saturated by images.

**Head of the Class**—*ABC, Wednesdays, 8:30-9 p.m. ET. Special two-part episode (check local listings for dates).* In

Capital Cities/ABC

this episode honoring the 10th anniversary of the Space Science Student Involvement Program (SSIP), the class visits the Johnson Space Center in Texas after Arvid and Dennis' science project is chosen for a space shuttle mission. Contact your ABC affiliate for science study guides produced by Kidsnet.

**Make the Grade**—*Nickelodeon, Mon-Fri., 6:30-7 p.m. ET.* A new game show with an academic twist. Three players exert their knowledge, speed, and strategy on an enormous board of seven subjects and seven grades ranging from elementary to grade 12. Players must give correct answers to questions in each subject category and at each grade level to win and reach the "Honor Roll" bonus round.

**Personal Diary**—*Black Entertainment Television, Fridays through March 23, 12:30-1 p.m. and 7:30-8 p.m. ET, then rebroadcast for 26 weeks.* Twenty-six Black leaders talk about their lives, accomplishments, and career turning points. The Cultural Information Service has produced a study guide with biographies and classroom suggestions. For a free copy, write P.O. Box 786, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159.

**War Between the Classes**—*HBO, check local listings for dates and times.* A history teacher gives students a real lesson about prejudice and stereotypes when he plays a "color" game, randomly separating his students into classes of power, privilege, and wealth.

**The Radio Stage**—*NPR Playhouse III, series premieres in November, check local listings for stations, dates, and times.* Eleven original dramas especially created for radio by such renowned playwrights as Wendy Wasserstein and Eric Overmyer.

**Jane Eyre**—*Arts & Entertainment Network, Sundays, Nov. 12 through Dec. 10, 9-10 p.m. ET.* Timothy Dalton and Welsh actress Velah Clark star in this gothic romance based on the classic novel by Charlotte Bronte.

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# Health

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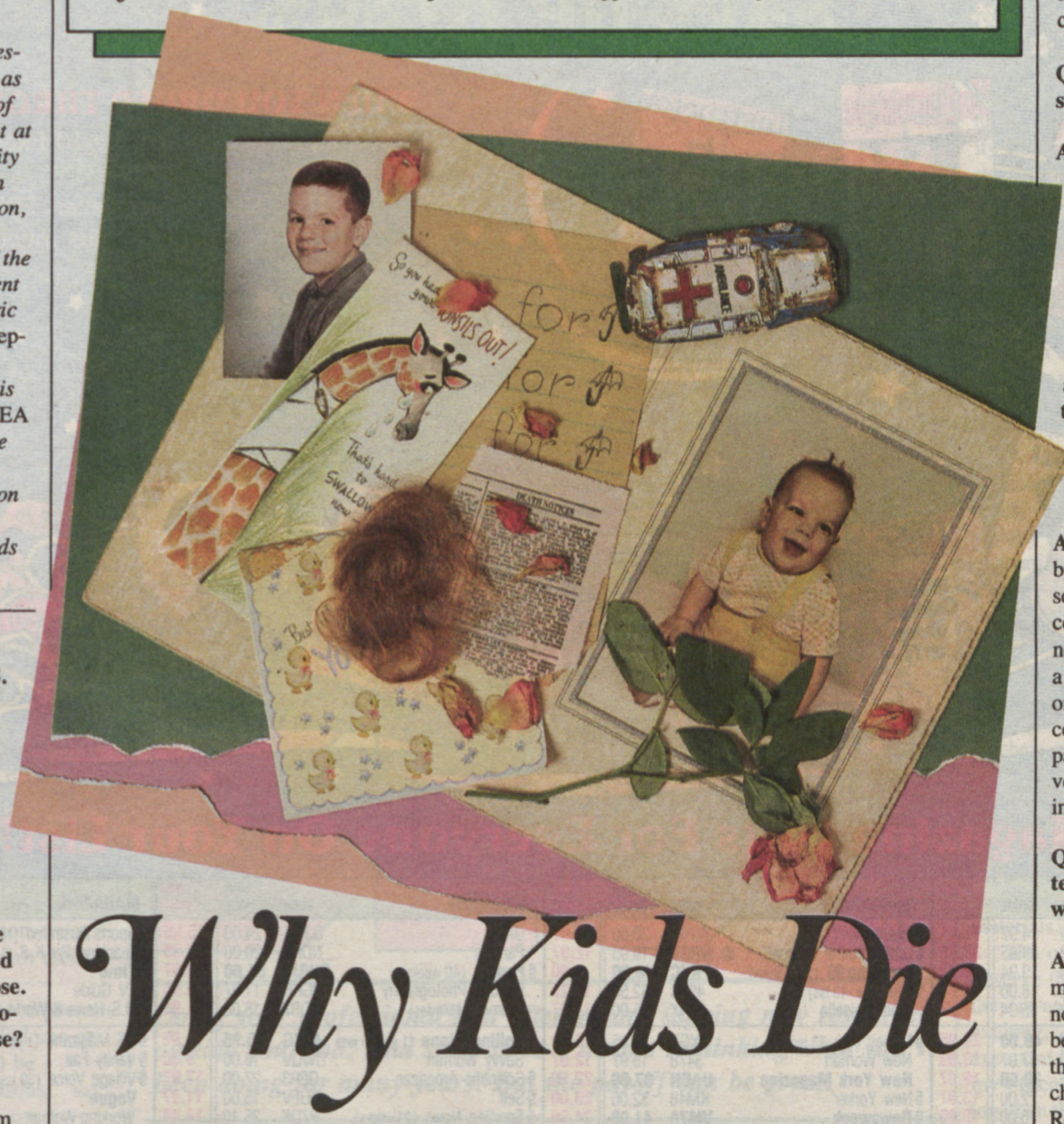

# Why Kids Die

*Lillian Beard, M.D., is a national spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics and an expert in adolescent health. Besides serving as associate clinical professor of child health and development at George Washington University School of Medicine, she is in private practice in Washington, D.C.*

*Dr. Beard is a member of the AAP's Council on Government Affairs and serves as pediatric consultant to* Good Housekeeping *magazine. In this issue of* NEA Today, *she answers questions on the major reasons kids die.*

**Q. What are the leading causes of death among U.S. children?**

A. Accidents, malignancies, congenital disorders, and infection. Suicide and homicide are high on the list, too.

**Q. Since school employees might be able to reduce the death toll from accident and suicide, let's talk about those. About how many young people die each year from those?**

A. Every month, nearly 400 children under age 4 die from accidents—mainly motor vehicle accidents, but also poisonings, drownings, falls, burns, and choking. About 4,400 children aged 5-14 die each year from accidents—almost half from motor vehicle accidents.

More than 5,000 youths between 15 and 24 years old commit suicide every year. Among children aged 5 to 14, suicides rose from 205 deaths in 1983 to a high of 278 in 1985.

**Q. What can we do to cut down on the number of childhood accidents in the U.S.?**

**A.** For several decades pediatricians have been practicing more preventive medicine. We've been using more anticipatory guidance counseling—actually teaching accident prevention and safety to parents and patients. The American Academy of Pediatrics has a comprehensive injury prevention program called TIPP, which pediatricians can use as a guideline for counseling kids from birth through adolescence.

If you teach parents to use safety belts and infant safety seats, for example, you can cut the number of injuries due to motor vehicle accidents. The TIPP program has been a big step in preventing injuries.

**Q. What else have we done to cut down on childhood injuries in the past few years?**

**A.** Preventive programs are run by many support groups—for instance, Students Against Drunk Drivers, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, and groups that investigate suicides. A number of organizations have done a lot to pass useful legislation, too.

**Q. Have these steps lessened injuries?**

**A.** Yes, I definitely think so. Even though we're still seeing more accidents and injuries than we'd like, these groups have done a lot to change behavior patterns, and that's cut the number of fatalities.

**Q. What kinds of injuries are most common among children, which among teenagers?**

**A.** Injuries that involve vehicles are the most common for both groups. With younger children, poisoning, falls, and burns are big risks, too.

Teenagers are more likely to be the victims of car or bicycle accidents. This is where the TIPP program is effective. When pediatricians and health educators teach children to use helmets when riding bicycles, they're helping prevent head injuries when a child falls.

**Q. Suicide is the third most common cause of death among children and the second among young adults. Even so, for every suicide, there are many more attempts. Why is this so?**

**A.** One reason may be that a young person who tries suicide may not actually want to die. The suicide attempt is a signal that a problem exists. When teenagers say, "I wish I were dead," they're really saying they want to stay alive, but they're very unhappy.

Today, I think, all teens are potential victims. They're not only going through troubling physiological and emotional changes, but they're doing it in a very confused society.

Some of the factors pushing teens toward suicide are peer pressure, family conflicts, drug and alcohol abuse, academic failure, inability to achieve their goals, and the loss of some special personal relationship. Youngsters don't see any immediate resolution to these factors, so they seek one in a suicide attempt.

**Q. More boys succeed in killing themselves than girls. Why is that?**

**A.** Maybe because they use more deadly methods, like guns and hanging. Girls are more likely to take poison or an overdose of something, which can be treated if it's discovered in time.

Child rearing in our society plays a part in that difference. Males are still reared to be stronger and more definitive in their actions, and that's reflected in their choices of suicide methods.

**Q. What are the warning signs of a potential suicide?**

**A.** The most common are a change in eating or sleeping patterns, withdrawal from family and friends, a decline in the quality of schoolwork, violent or rebellious behavior, a noticeable personality change, unusual neglect of appearance, drug or alcohol abuse, or the giving away of treasured items.

**Q. What causes "cluster suicides"?**

**A.** Experts are still perplexed by the fact that youth suicide seems to be contagious within a community. Shortly after a newspaper reports a suicide or a movie about suicide is shown on TV, a few teenagers may commit suicide—maybe, in part, because adolescents are very impulsive and very impressionable.

**Q. How should a friend or teacher approach someone who seems to be suicidal?**

**A.** The important thing is to make the approach. Don't ignore the warning signs. Don't be afraid that your bringing up the subject will provoke the child into committing suicide. Research shows this isn't the case. Listen to the youngster's description of what the trouble is—without belittling it. Try to establish communication with the youngster's family about your suspicion. Seek help from the school counselor, psychologists, clergy, and social workers.

**Q. In 1987, gun accidents were the fourth leading cause of death for children under age 14. Ten children under 18 die every day in handgun suicides, homicides, and accidents. What can we all do to reduce this toll?**

**A.** In fact, every day for several years someone under 24 in this country has been killed by a handgun. Some of these deaths are suicides, some are accidents, and some are homicides, but with stronger gun control legislation, many would be prevented.

If we were to remove guns from our homes, the number of gun accidents and gun deaths would decrease significantly. We need to pass laws that will make guns less accessible.

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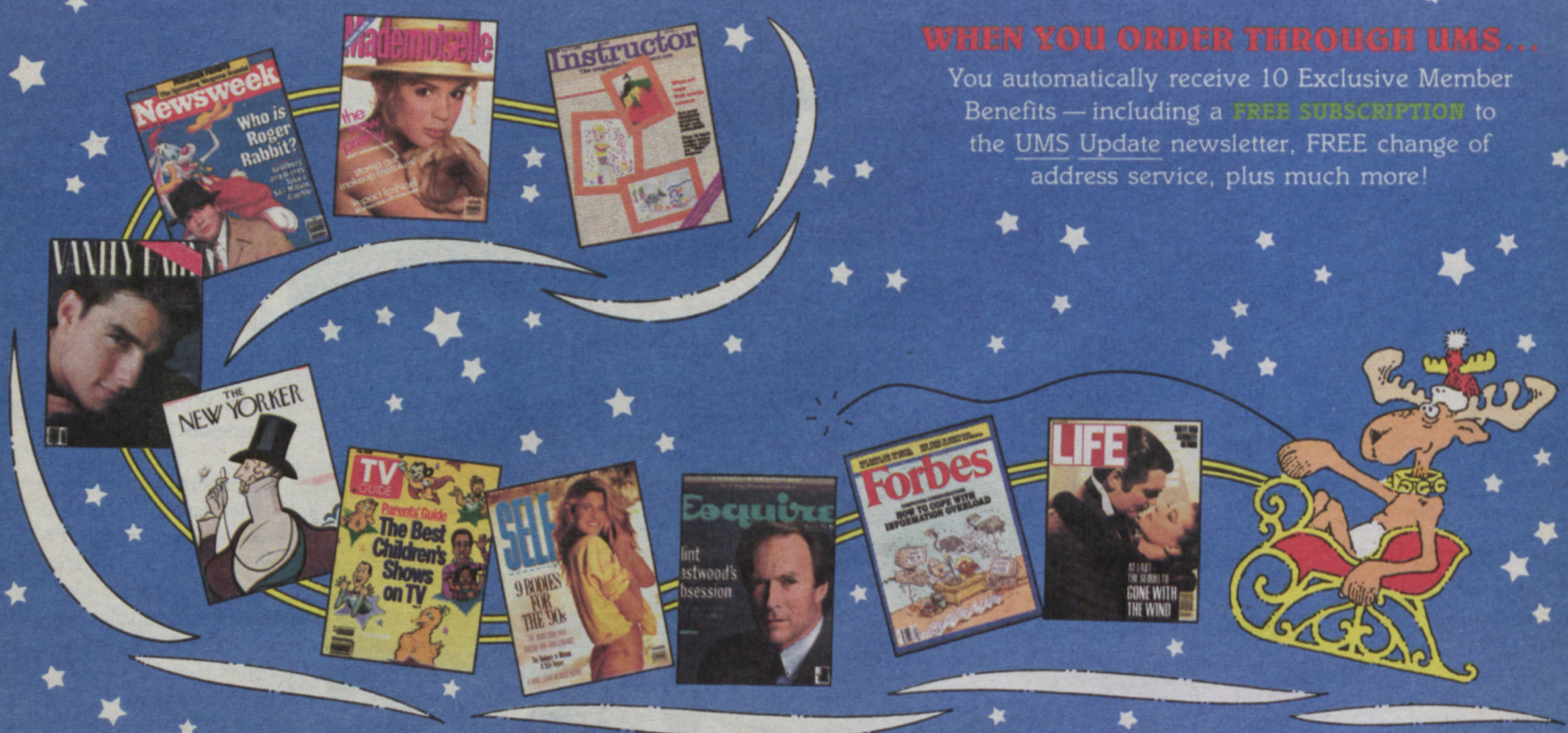


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STAFF DEVELOPMENT

# THE QUEST TO BE THE BEST

***Doing your professional best often means tapping new resources outside your job. And sometimes it means rethinking what you've been doing for many years. But the payoff can be great.***

As social studies teachers in Eastmont, Wash., Nita and Bob Paine decided their global approach to teaching would get a boost if they, well, traveled the globe.

"Much of social studies is devoted primarily to developed countries and not enough to third world countries. That doesn't make much sense to us as former Peace Corps workers," says Nita Paine. "We wanted to talk about those countries and talk from experience. That's where our trip comes in."

And not just any trip. In an unusual sabbatical arrangement, the husband and wife team will spend one year—beginning August 1990—traveling the world. The school board agreed to pay the Paines half their annual salary in advance to help them on their way.

Though not everyone can arrange a year abroad, NEA members across the country are demonstrating their commitment to professionalism and renewal by taking part in a variety of professional development activities—many of them district-sponsored.

Staff retreats to revamp the curriculum, wellness programs for personal growth, and courses teaching cooperative learning strategies, classroom management skills, and cultural awareness aid in the revitalization of educational staff. And that in turn translates into better learning opportunities for their students.

In Seminole County, Fla., professional renewal means personal growth and to members of the Non-Instructional Personnel of Seminole County (NIPSCO) this means continuing their education. Through a unique arrangement with county administration, NIPSCO members can now earn their GED.

"For some of our maintenance personnel members, a high school diploma or GED was a goal that couldn't be achieved—for a variety of reasons," says Chuck Donaldson, one of the coordinators of NIPSCO's Quality Circles program. Quality Circles is an NEA-sponsored Team Approach to Better Schools (TABS) project designed to strengthen relationships between support staff and management and give workers a say in creating a better work environment.

"Now if members who are working toward their GED go to class one hour a week on their own time, they will receive two hours of release time from the county to continue their studies," adds Donaldson.

"When we held our first meeting to set up the GED program, we got a great response," says Donaldson. "Men in their twenties and on up into their fifties expressed their desire to earn their diploma. It was terrific to see. Now, we have members asking us what the Quality Circles will do next and even making suggestions of their own."

In Phoenix, Ariz., staff development opportunities are part of the contract negotiated by the Phoenix Union High School District Classroom Teachers Association, and teachers throughout the district are reaping the benefits.

Seven classroom teachers are assigned full-time to the Phoenix Union High School District Staff Development Center. Their mission? To provide the district's teachers with professional assistance in classroom management skills, instructional methods, even supervision. The seven are not part of the evaluation process, however.

Mary Harthun, for example, is on a three-year special assignment to South Mountain High School. There, she helps staff assess and meet their development needs.

"My role is to give South Mountain teachers every opportunity to grow," says Harthun.

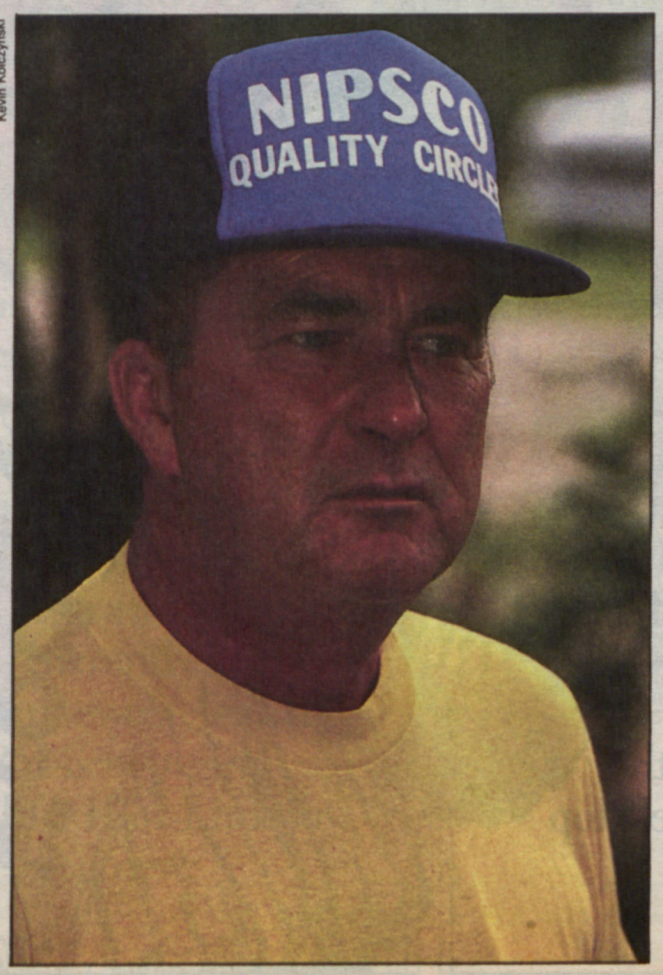
Harthun surveyed South Mountain staff and developed workshops and cultural awareness seminars. She also showed faculty the real value of interdisciplinary sharing of methods and materials.

"Not only are teachers asking me to observe their classes and offer feedback, they're asking each other and that's exciting," adds Harthun. "The real expertise lies within this staff, and I see my office as a vehicle for linking them together to find new ways to teach.

"I've already seen the difference," says Harthun. "Veterans can't wait to sign up for another class or to develop one for their colleagues, and this enthusiasm is spilling over to the students as well. Everyone is not only involved but positively affected by a process involving change and growth."

*—Anita Merina*

Kevin Kolczynski

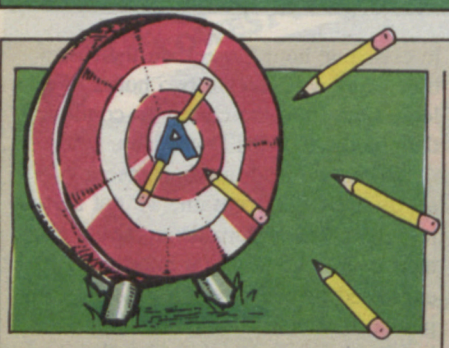



***"Our Quality Circles Program creates opportunities for personal and professional growth, and that says we care about ourselves and our work," says Seminole County, Fla., maintenance worker Chuck Donaldson.***

Ken Akers

***South Mountain staff development coordinator Mary Harthun says opening up to new ideas, perspectives, and teaching styles gives even veteran Phoenix teachers a fresh outlook and a chance to enrich student learning.***

# IDEA EXCHANGE



## Aiming To Succeed

Bill Freeman has a wide range of learning abilities among his students in Little Ferry, N.J. That's not news. What's not so common is Freeman's way of dealing with that range—a system he calls "Target Grades."

The Memorial School social studies teacher sets individual grade goals for his sixth, seventh, and eighth graders according to their abilities. The goal can be adjusted when it would be in the student's best interest.

If the student meets the target grade on the weekly chapter test, Freeman hands over the homework answers for the next textbook chapter. Students who don't make the target grade have to hunt up the answers themselves.

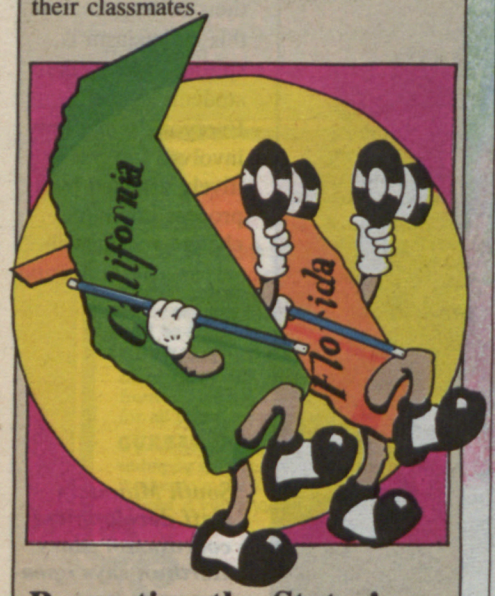
As further reward, Freeman buys lunch for kids who meet their target grades four times in a row.

## Getting To Know You

San Diego teacher Marge Knothe invites her students and their parents to visit her classroom just before school opens each year. The John Paul Jones School teacher—San Diego's Elementary Teacher of the Year—has five or six families come in at a time, at half-hour intervals, so the visits can be really personal.

While the parents chat, fill out questionnaires, and read about classroom procedures, the youngsters get a tour of the room, an introduction to the hands-on materials they'll be using, and a chance to choose their own desk and seating place on the class rug.

Having their parents nearby makes the children's introduction to school go smoothly, notes Knothe, and they also get acquainted with kids who'll soon be their classmates.




## Presenting the States!

Ken Robertson's fourth- and fifth-grade social studies students at William Smith Elementary School in Huntingdon, Pa., learn U.S. geography in a unique way—by creating video ads for states.

Using TV ad campaigns ("I Love New York" and "You've Got a Friend in Pennsylvania") as models, each team of four to six kids creates a slogan, jingle, poem, or rap as a state theme. They include such information as natural resources, historical facts, tourist attractions, and climate.

"We videotape each group as they perform," says Robertson. "The kids love seeing themselves on TV, and the tapes are a real hit with parents who come in for open house."

## Hail to the Writers!

For six years the Willow Run unit of the Washtenaw-Livingston (Mich.) Education Association has celebrated the district's annual Teacher and School Family Day by honoring student writers.

The honorees are winners in an annual contest open to all district high school juniors and seniors. Last year some 75 students competed by writing on the assigned topic, "The Year 2000: A Day in the Life of a Student."

After a committee of teachers selected 11 finalists, a panel of outside judges chose the three top winners. Willow Run teachers donated the prizes: savings bonds of $150, $100, and $50 for the first, second, and third place winners. All three winners read their essays at a school board meeting.

Since the competition began, Willow Run teachers say they've noticed a real improvement in student writing skills.

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## TECH TALK

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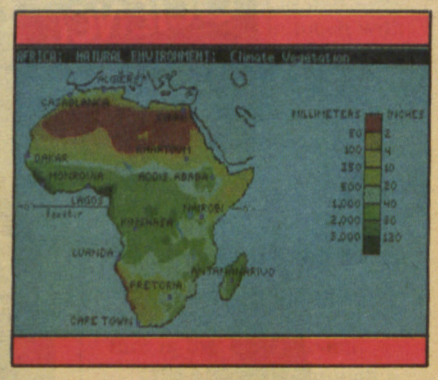
"In effect, Compton's has created the world's first totally integrated research tool that can be used right in the classroom and library," says Britannica Software President Stanley D. Frank, who supervised the creation of the electronic package, which currently operates on IBM-AT, IBM-PS/2 Model 30 personal computers and the Tandy Model 100 TL with compatible CD-ROM drives by Sony, Hitachi, and AMDEK.

"In response to teacher requests, we've not simply transferred a printed text to a computer screen. We've added animation, sound, graphics, and sophisticated pathways."

The "pathways" are creative indexes that allow the viewer to get additional information in a variety of ways. The science feature area, for example, includes a *Science Feature Articles* path, with articles selected by teacher panels from across the United States. These special articles have been embellished with animation, sounds, and graphics.

The encyclopedia's *World Atlas* includes a "zoom" feature that allows the user to rotate a globe, examine it in greater detail and access articles on specific locations by clicking the computer's user button or "mouse."



***A sample entry in the geography section of the new Compton's Multimedia Encyclopedia.***

In addition, a *U.S. History Timeline* enables students to browse along an extensive listing of significant historical events. By clicking the mouse, the student views a capsule description of the event and learns why it was important in U.S. history. The student can then call up articles related to that event. Many entries are enhanced by sound, so users can hear as well as read the words of John F. Kennedy and Neil Armstrong. A symbol depicting earphones indicates the availability of sound.

A visually-oriented child can search for articles by sorting through the encyclopedia's *Picture Explorer*. When the student finds a picture of interest, a click of the mouse will bring up a corresponding article.

All of these features accompany a search and retrieval system that allows students to search by topic, exact article title, and idea with relative ease. Feature articles with hard-to-understand concepts have been supplemented with *Take Another Look*—examples and summaries to help a student better grasp the concept.

If that isn't enough, this encyclopedia features an on-line notepad, an electronic bookmark, an article index, topic index, and the entire *Merriam-Webster Intermediate Dictionary*.

In all, Compton's contains 31,000 articles; 10,000 photographs; 5,800 maps, charts, and graphs; and eight multiple entry paths. If the entries were entered onto floppy disks, the 600 megabytes of memory would fit onto approximately 1,800 floppy disks. The software is available to schools and libraries for $795, $895 for individuals.

*—Anita Merina*

*For more information on the Compton's MultiMedia Encyclopedia, contact Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation, 1-800-554-9862.*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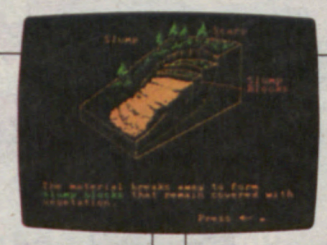

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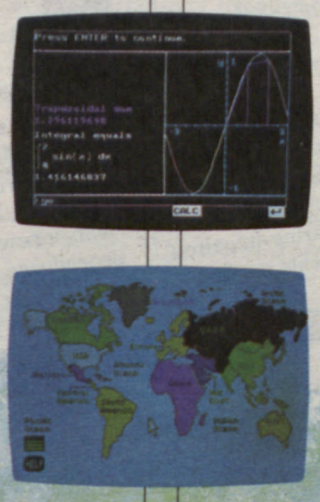

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# People

## Extraterrestrials Find Their Literary Place

When Charles and **Mary Ryan** started intercepting stories beamed into outer space by an alien anthropologist studying earth (sure, we're serious), they realized they were onto a good thing. The Ryans—she a first-grade teacher at Wyman School in Woburn, Mass., he the managing editor of a Boston-area daily paper—started publishing the "stolen" stories in a new magazine they called *Aboriginal Science Fiction*. (*Aboriginal* here means literally "from the original." Using it as a title also places the Ryans' publication alphabetically ahead of its top competitors, whose titles begin *Amazing*, *Analog*, and *Asimov's*).

The interceptions began in 1986. Last year, according to Association member Mary Ryan, *Aboriginal* tripled its subscription list, reaching 20,000 circulation. This year the Ryans hope to double readership again.

"Because the stories are short and each has a couple of four-color illustrations," points out Mary Ryan, a 24-year teaching veteran, "they're ideal material for tempting older students to read."

At the same time, she notes, the volume of manuscripts submitted—100 for every story that gets into print—keeps literary quality high.

You can make contact with *Aboriginal* through P.O. Box 2449, Woburn, MA 01888-0849. A year's subscription will cost $12 before, $14 after Dec. 15.

## Signing In Spanish

"It's hard to explain to my students that there are different languages—they never *hear* foreign languages. But," says **Judith Papesh-Reynolds**, who teaches signed and written Spanish at the Indiana School for the Deaf, "when they *see* foreign sign language it clicks."

Until the mid-1980s, Papesh-Reynolds taught Spanish using American Sign Language, and lots of tedious finger spelling. But—with help from several foundations, Gallaudet University, and even Indiana-born comedian David Letterman (who donated money to the school)—she's changed all that.

Papesh-Reynolds traveled to Spain, where deaf volunteers helped her compile the first lexicon of Spanish Sign Language—12 hours of video made to complement a new Spanish textbook series designed for hearing-impaired students. And she took her students on summer trips to Mexico, where they could practice what they'd learned with deaf students.

Being trilingual—English, American Sign Language, and Spanish—has given the students a new sense of accomplishment and independence. "It's opened up the world to them," says Papesh-Reynolds.

Tom Strickland

Doug Lindley

## This Yarn You Won't Believe

Idaho winters *can* be cold. But a mile-long muffler?

Actually, the muffler—begun as a knitting project for **Craig Wampler's** (above, right) fourth graders at Aberdeen Elementary-Junior High School—got to be more than a mile and a quarter long.

Wampler's students decided to make the scarf after reading *Ernie and the Mile-Long Muffler*, the story of a boy determined to create a gigantic muffler. Soon the rest of the school's 450 K-6 students joined in the knit. Second grade teacher **Ed McClure** (far left), stitched the segments together.

The project next spread to the community and beyond. Contributions of yarn and money for yarn poured in. Houghton Mifflin, publisher of *Ernie*, donated copies to the school library. Houghton Mifflin employees collected and donated yet more yarn.

When the students completed the muffler last spring, all of Aberdeen—a small town some 45 road miles from Pocatello—celebrated with a huge parade that featured 600 students and teachers carrying the creation.

Today, the magnificent muffler is no more, but its segments live on as individual mufflers worn by hundreds of Aberdeen residents and as throws that warm the laps of its senior citizens.

## Discovering The Past

Royce Bair

At the Utah State Capitol in Salt Lake City, Duchesne County fifth grade teacher **Dallas Murray** and two of his neighbors on the Ute reservation, Jenna and Rena Duncan, celebrate the correction of an historical oversight.

For 50 years portrait busts of two Ute Indian leaders, Chief John Duncan and medicine man Unca-Sam, stood in the Capitol without identifying plaques. Now, thanks to the efforts of Murray and his students—and of descendants of the two leaders, including Jenna and Rena Duncan—the busts will be identified.

"I knew John Duncan from my childhood," Murray explains, "so I recognized him immediately when I first saw the bust years ago." Murray is not an Indian, but he's always lived on the Ute reservation (some 100 miles southeast of Salt Lake City) and he's known various generations of the Duncan family.

"Last school year, I realized that two of Duncan's descendants—Jenna and Rena—were students in a nearby elementary school. I saw a good chance to do something about those unidentified busts in Salt Lake City. So I got in touch with Rene and Jenna and got my own students interested in going up to the Capitol and getting the sculptures properly labeled.

"The students raised the money to pay for plaques [temporarily installed for the photograph], which we'll formally present to the legislature in the 1990 session.

"We also went through a mock session—right in the legislators' chairs—with Rena testifying about the two leaders. Next year a legislator is going to introduce a resolution calling for a wall plaque. That will give the whole historical background of the two leaders. We're going back to the Capitol to testify for the resolution."

Joe Di Dio

Joe Di Dio

## In a Crunch, They Care

To Maryland ESP members **Nancy Bell** (left) and **Donna Voohar** (right), the best gift one can give is time. As emergency medical technicians (EMTs) in their county volunteer rescue squads—Nancy Bell works in Boonesboro and Donna Voohar in St. Mary's—the time they give is precious indeed.

"I remember an automobile accident involving a teenager who had just left the wedding of a friend. She would have died, but everyone worked tirelessly to save her," says Voohar, an emergency intravenous technician on the rescue team when she's not at her regular job as a school secretary.

Boonesboro bus driver Nancy Bell cites personal reasons for her work with the rescue squad. "When my son was in an automobile accident seven years ago, the Boonesboro squad did its best to try to save him. I feel that this way I'm giving something back," she says.

"Human life is so precious," adds Bell, "if we can give someone another chance at life, then all the training, all the hours are worth it."

## North Dakota: Home on the Range

*Folks like mine helped settle this land,*
*Gave us our beginnings, and helped me understand,*
*What it means to love and cherish*
*The blue skies up above,*
*Coyotes howling nightly,*
*Dakota hills and prairie that I love!*

Lonnie Bentsch

In a way, **Fran Erickson**, self-described "cowgirl and folklorist," is just paying her respects. By writing and reciting rhymed verse about coal miners and their mules, cowboys, Indians, farmers, bartenders, rivers, blizzards, and badgers, Erickson hands down North Dakota's past from one generation to the next.

A third-grade teacher at Beulah (N. Dak.) Elementary School, Erickson's made her own contribution to this year's North Dakota Centennial: a newly published book of poems, *The Hills of Home*.

Erickson says the book's popularity can be traced to two things. First, "everybody's intrigued by the past." Second, Erickson's a bit of a ham when it comes to doing "oral interpretations" of her poems at county fairs. "You have to expose yourself a little bit," she laughs, "especially when you're competing with a greased pig contest."

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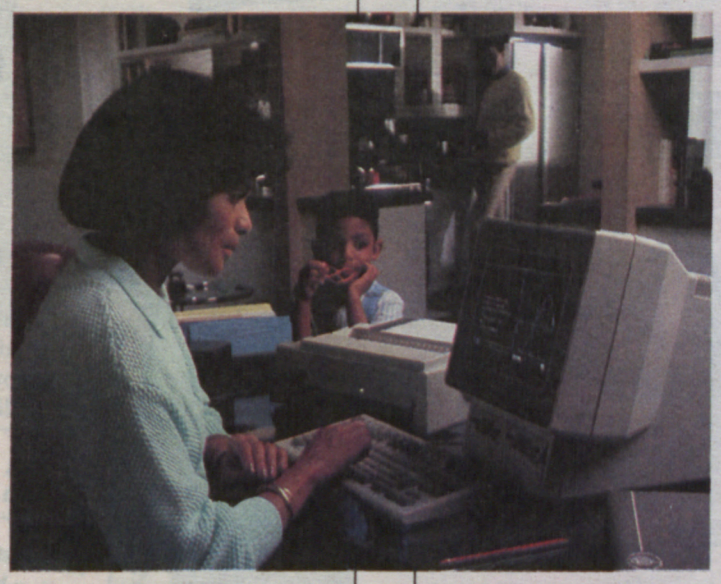

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# Innovation

*How educators are changing the way schools work.*

## Want To Change a School? Start with the Schedule

***When Dennis Littky became principal of Thayer (N.H.) High School, he knew the way to turn the school around was to set it up so teachers—and students—could take their ideas and run with them. That was eight years ago. Thayer High's a very different place today, and it's still changing.***

**The year before Dennis Littky (pictured here with some of his students) became principal of Thayer High School, Winchester, N.H., study hall was the most popular subject, dropouts were plentiful, and few students went on to college.**

**Now in *Doc: The Story of Dennis Littky and His Fight for a Better School* (Contemporary Books, 304 pp. $18.95), Susan Kammeraad-Campbell—who covered the Littky story for the *Keene Sentinel*—tells how all that changed.**

**The sensational side of Dennis Littky's story—his ultimately successful battle with local adversaries to keep the Thayer principalship—made *Newsweek* and "West 57th." But underlying all the drama is a theory of school management at once canny and idealistic: Littky believes the purpose of a school is to provide "nurturing environments," structures that "clear the way for teachers and students to exercise their creative and productive energy for the good of the school."**

**The following excerpt from *Doc* focuses on the school schedule—specifically on eliminating study halls—as a way to create such environments.**

For three days Littky and counselor Phil Hamm worked out a schedule, anxiously preparing for the first of the individual conferences with all 350 students. All study halls had been eliminated, but that posed a problem. It meant students would have to be in one class or another *every* period of the day—and there simply weren't enough teachers to go around. When he looked at schedules from the previous year, Littky discovered that most students had taken only two or three classes, then padded the rest of their day with study halls.

"No wonder things were out of control," he said. "Those kids must have been bored as hell."

But study halls had accomplished one thing. With so few class periods, there were enough teachers to cover the courses that were offered.

Littky and Phil Hamm grappled with the problem for several hours, then came up with a solution, albeit an imperfect one.

"Let's cut the class periods down from seven to five," Littky said. "We still don't have enough teachers, but let's try to make it work." They hammered out a general schedule, doing their best to match teachers and classes.

Four days into the process, Littky got a call from the bus company. A company official had phoned to ask what hours Thayer would be operating on in the fall. It had never occurred to Littky that the local district could control the length of the school day through something as simple as the school bus schedule.

He told the man he'd call him back, hung up, and contacted the state department of education to find out the minimum number of hours students had to be in school daily. If he could control when students came to school, he could restructure the school day completely. The answer from the state was heartening—five-and-a-half hours.

By shortening the day and lengthening the class periods from 50 minutes to an hour there would be almost enough teachers for a full schedule of class periods and enough classes to handle all the students. Using outside resources and volunteers, he could fill in any holes that remained.

Dennis phoned Assistant Superintendent Roger Sundstrom.

"Roger," he said. "I want to cut the school day back to five one-hour periods."

Michael Moore

"What was that?" Sundstrom asked.

"I want to shorten the day for students by an hour. They would come to school at 8:50 a.m. and leave at 2:20 p.m., but every student would be required to take five classes, with no study halls—it's like gaining two or three teachers."

"I don't know, Dennis," Sundstrom said reluctantly. "That sounds a little extreme. The state requires...."

"I just talked to the state," Littky said quickly. "The minimum is five-and-a-half. I could use the hour in the morning to meet with teachers, maybe have a regular breakfast meeting every Monday. The other days could be used by teachers for individual student conferences, private meetings with me, or class preparation. I really need the time with the staff to set goals, work on curriculum, and get this school in order. Study halls have got to go—they almost ruined the school last year. This is the only way to do it."

Sundstrom dug his heels in. "I don't know Dennis. You'd have to get the okay from the board on that. Ultimately, it's their decision."

"Yeah, I know. I think I can manage that."

An issue that kept coming up was the need to make the schedule relevant to the students. "I don't want them to be in class just to be in a class," Littky said time and again. "I want their learning to be relevant and compelling. There are just too many kids who don't do well in a rigidly structured classroom environment. I want to offer them alternatives, some variety, something that makes learning come alive.

"A vocational center could do that, and we've got the makings of a first-class center right here in the community. There isn't a piece of automotive machinery that Ronnie Bedaw doesn't have in his garage. There isn't a single piece of beauty equipment that isn't at the Village Beauty Salon. Not only that, the beauty shop and Ronnie can provide real-world experience. We wouldn't be *simulating* the workplace, we'd actually be in it.

"Each apprenticeship could be custom-designed to suit a particular kid. Not only that, it would hardly cost the school anything."

"You're right!" Phil said. "All we need is someone to coordinate the thing."

"I've been working on that for a couple of days. The budget says we've got $10,500 to hire a new English teacher. While it's true we could use another English instructor, I've come up with a plan that'll make better use of that money.

"I want to hire three part-time people instead—one to run an apprenticeship program, one to act as a community coordinator, and one to run a building construction program. I'm still debating about the third job, bringing in a carpenter who would teach kids building skills. The kids would be learning and building structures that could be used by the school, maybe help expand our classroom space. God knows we need more of that."

---

Excerpted from and published simultaneously with *Doc: The Story of Dennis Littky and His Fight for a Better School.*
© 1989 Susan Kammeraad-Campbell and Dennis Littky. Adapted with permission of Contemporary Books.

### Thayer Update...

Dale Courtney, president of the Winchester Education Association, has been Thayer High's assistant principal for 10 years.

"So much has happened since the events described in this excerpt occurred that it's hard to connect then and now," Courtney says. "But Thayer still has no study halls, and it still has a strong apprenticeship program.

"The school schedule has changed yet again—this time after consultation among the faculty," he adds. "We're on the threshold of being one of the leading schools around."

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**Newspapers can be powerful learning tools— and not only in language arts and social studies. NEA members show how they're turning students on to newspapers (and that means on to reading.)**

## Teachers Discover New Resource: Newspapers

After four years of teaching computer science, Pat Frost-Brooks (pictured here) wanted to do something different for her students.

"I noticed that all these *Cleveland Plain Dealers* [Ohio's largest newspaper] were coming in for the reading programs, and I thought, surely there has to be something in there for me," says Brooks, a seventh- and eighth-grade computer science teacher at W. H. Kirk Middle School in East Cleveland, Ohio.

Brooks found "in there," columns on computer technology and numerous articles mentioning computers' impact on various aspects of society.

"I looked through every inch of the paper," Frost-Brooks recalls. "Then I started brainstorming ways to use it in my classroom."

Today, Frost-Brooks assigns her students three different classroom projects based entirely on newspapers. Students create scrapbooks of articles that show the impact of computers on society. They comparison shop for computers as if they were planning to buy. "They read the fine print," explains Frost-Brooks. "They compare prices, features, and service before they make their final decisions."

Students also examine the want ads to analyze the job market for computer specialists and the variety of occupations involving computers.

**Newspapers have been standard teaching tools for years.** Vocabulary, current events knowledge, reading comprehension skills—all have been taught with the help of the daily paper. But newspapers are increasing their coverage of social, economic, and scientific developments, and teachers are discovering new classroom applications in areas like math, science, geography, and health.

"What better way to show students real-life situations and applications than through the daily newspaper?" says Sheila Powell, fourth-grade teacher at Riverside Elementary School in Salt Lake City, Utah.

"In school, we have a tendency to make the world too make-believe, with handouts and fictionalized examples," says Powell, who uses *The Deseret News* to teach geography, math, economics, and language arts. "I use the newspaper in all subject areas, because students see that it has real applications to their own life and world-view."

**To counter TV news and entertainment,** newspaper publishers offer their papers free or at a substantial discount to local schools. Many join in the Newspaper in Education (NIE) program of the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA). Established in 1932, NIE links newspapers and educators to develop curriculum, resources, and partnerships. Over 600 newspapers ranging from small, family-run papers to media giants, participate in NIE programs.

In rural Mississippi, the *Copiah County Courier* formed a partnership with schools in Hazelhurst—a poor district with high illiteracy rates—that changed not only the lives of students but the newspaper itself.

Students began to take the paper home and read it to their parents; soon the *Courier* saturated the regional market. After surveying teachers, editor and publisher Jim Lambert added puzzles, science news, and Mississippi history.

"We're raising a generation of kids who tend to think of TV first. This program shows the advantages of reading," says Lambert.

*USA Today*, the national daily newspaper, sponsors an educational program called *CLASSLINE*, which enables teachers to use the paper in a variety of ways. During the 1988-89 school year, *CLASSLINE* held a contest for the most innovative educational uses of the newspaper.

"Newspapers are a gold mine of information—and you really can't beat the cost," says Utah's Powell. Ohio's Frost-Brooks agrees. "I tell my students, if you can afford to buy candy, you can buy a newspaper. It may not fill your stomach, but it will enrich you in many other ways."

*—Anita Merina*

Joe Glick

*For information on Newspaper in Education programs in your area:*

The ANPA Foundation
The Newspaper Center
Box 17407
Dulles Airport
Washington, DC 20041
1-703-648-1000

*For information on USA Today's CLASSLINE Program:*

CLASSLINE
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Washington, DC 20044
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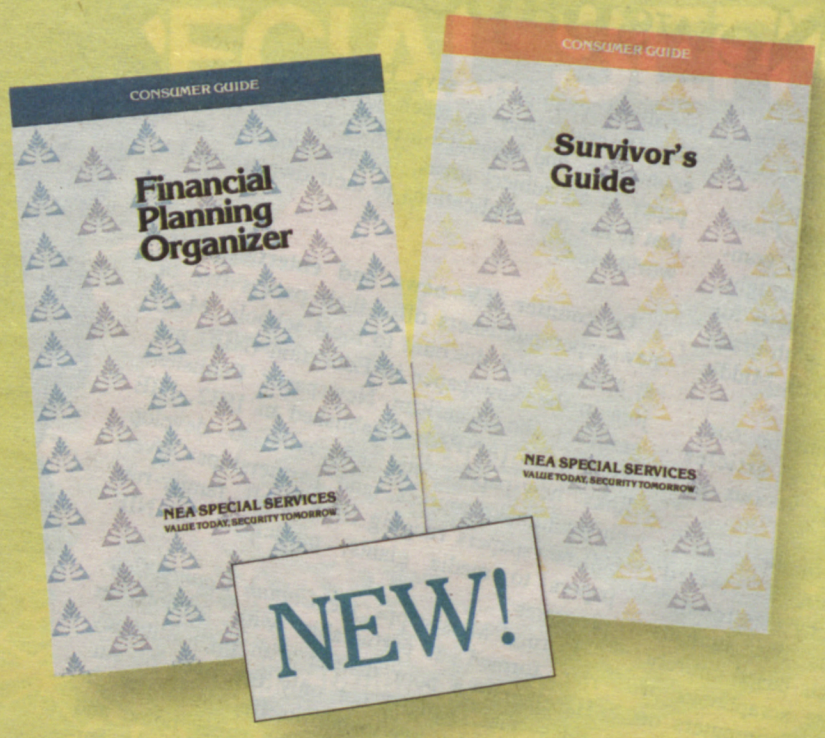


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# Looking Back

Carolyn Salisbury

The NEA-created National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) is tapping the expertise of three previous grant recipients to help seven new dropout prevention projects get off to a good start. The former recipients are Association members Donnis Deever, Marian Pritchett ("All I Needed Was One Good Reason To Stay in School," Jan./Feb 1987), and Gloria Barragan ("From the Board Room to the Classroom," Feb. 1989). The three recently led a technical assistance workshop in Washington, D.C., to help 1989-90 recipients (see page 33) develop program ideas and encourage them in seeking district and community support.

Deever's Glendale, Ariz., project sponsors a teacher in-service program and a daily seminar for "at-risk" high school students (above, Gadsden, N. Mex., teacher Paul Morales and Deever, right, at the workshop). Pritchett heads a project at Booth Memorial School in Boise, Idaho, aimed at preventing pregnant teens from dropping out. Barragan directs Project CARE, a mentor program, in Ysleta, Texas.

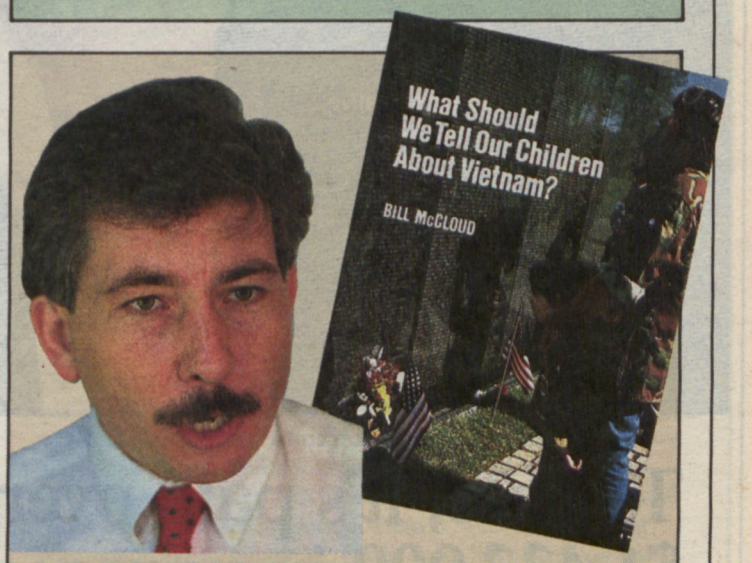
CARE provides mentors from the business community for potential dropouts in grades 4-7. Each of the 40 mentors "adopts" two kids. Backing up the mentor program, teachers visit students' homes during the school day to tell parents how they can help their kids learn.

Since the program has been in effect, Barragan notes, the students involved have started to like coming to school. "Now that they have a sense of belonging," she says, "so they're able to do better."

When her school board offered $50,000 and legal fees, Sue Collins settled out-of-court. Backed by the Texas State Teachers Association, the Waco (Texas) High School social science teacher sued her district when she was punished for refusing to change a football player's failing grade (Local Look, Dec. 1988). The settlement follows a U.S. district court decision to grant the school board's request for a second trial.

In the first trial, a federal district judge ordered both the Waco superintendent of schools and the Waco High School principal to pay Collins $25,000—personally—in punitive damages. He also ordered the Waco Independent School District to pay Collins $25,000—and the same two school officials to pay her $1,000 each—for causing her "stress and mental anguish."

In the out-of-court settlement, the district paid Collins $50,000 for mental anguish. It also agreed to pay the attorney fees, which added up to $177,000. Collins has now left the Waco area.




Joe Di Dio

When Vietnam veteran and Oklahoma social studies teacher Bill McCloud wrote to 150 of the nation's policymakers, pundits, and military leaders, asking what they considered most important to tell this country's children about Vietnam ("People," Nov. 1988), he expected only a handful of replies. But the responses poured in—128 in all.

"It was as if they were waiting to be asked the question," says the Pryor Junior High School teacher. Among the more famous respondents were President George Bush, folksinger Pete Seeger, cartoonist Garry Trudeau, author Kurt Vonnegut, and Generals Alexander Haig and William Westmoreland.

The responses were first printed in the May-June 1988 issue of *American Heritage*. Last month they appeared as the text of a book that also includes McCloud's chronology of the war years and a suggested reading list for secondary school students. *What Should We Tell Our Children About Vietnam?* ($17.95) was published by the University of Oklahoma Press (1005 Asp Ave., Norman, OK 73019, 1-405/325-5111). "My goal in compiling the book," says McCloud, "was to get folks of the Vietnam War generation to start talking about that time to kids of today. Now, that's beginning to happen."

The New Jersey Education Department has taken control of the Jersey City school system ("Should States Take Over 'Bankrupt' School Districts?," April 1989). It's the first state takeover of a school district in New Jersey history.

New Jersey is one of nine states where the state board of education can legally intervene in the operation of local districts alleged to be afflicted with low student achievement or other "serious and intractable problems."

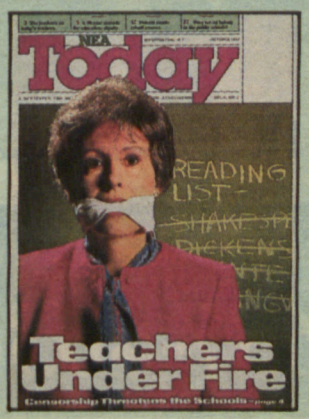
Former Essex County superintendent of schools Elena Scambio is the new state-appointed superintendent in Jersey City. News reports say she may try to renegotiate contracts with school employees to create experimental plans that offer them more power and more money for more work and perhaps longer hours.

Florida teacher Gloria Pipkin ("Battling Censors," Oct. 1987) recently received a national award from the Courage Foundation, citing her as a "contemporary hero" for spearheading a battle against school officials over book-banning in her Bay County district. A teaching ban on three books—*I Am the Cheese*, *About David*, and *Never Cry Wolf*—continues.

The Courage Foundation is a nonprofit organization that rewards "people in public life who have courageously discharged their official duties...and individuals who, in the face of controversy as well as personal and professional risk, have taken informed and principled stands on significant issues."

"A lot of people were courageous," says Pipkin. "I have a long list of my own heroes as a result of this experience—especially the teachers who were loyal and steadfast."

Among this year's other Courage Foundation award recipients are former Surgeon-General C. Everett Koop, former Federal Reserve Board Chair Paul Volker, and former U.S. Attorney General for New York City and current New York mayoral candidate Rudolph Giuliani.



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# RESOURCES

## Free or Inexpensive

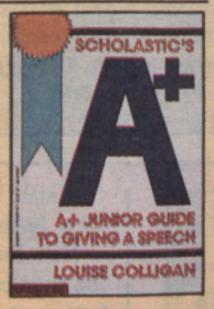
### CLASSROOM ART

***Seasonal Art.*** Louise Schnell. Contains reproducible color-cut-and-paste art projects for each school month. K-3. 52 pp. $5.95 plus $1.50 per order p&h. (CA residents add 7 percent sales tax.) Prepay by check to Teacher Tested-Child Satisfying, 1726 W. Montecito Way, San Diego, CA 92103.

### POSTER

***Washington, DC.*** Color poster displays five key structures of the Federal City: the Capitol, The White House, the Washington Monument, the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials. 20"x 27". $10 plus $2.50 p&h per order, prepaid. Wasserman Design, 1511 K St., N.W. #1100, Washington, DC 20005.

### SPEECH




***Scholastic's A+ Junior Guide to Giving a Speech.*** Louise Colligan. Shows how to zero in on a good speech topic, research it, then write up and deliver the speech. 106 pp. $2.50. From booksellers or by mail from Scholastic Inc., 730 Broadway, New York, NY 10003.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

***The Development Data Book*** (second edition). The World Bank. Student booklet explains key statistical concepts in economic development (e.g., GNP per capita or population growth rate) and displays in tabular form 17 social and economic indicators for 129 countries. Second edition. Stock no. IB-1100. Classroom set (includes 11 student books and 1 teaching guide), $9.95. Individuals prepay or supply credit card information. World Bank Publications, P.O. Box 7247-8619, Philadelphia, PA 19170-8619.

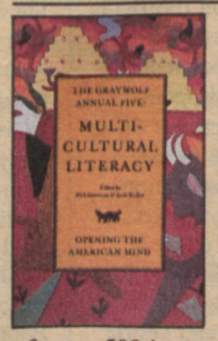
### DANCE

***The Story of the Nutcracker Ballet for Young Children.*** Retold by Renee Forrest. Illustrated by Gary Zika. The music teacher and the art teacher at Glendale Elementary, Madison, Wisc., have collaborated on a story/coloring book to prepare primary students for holiday performances of *The Nutcracker*. The result? The "wiggle factor" during a live performance was down 90 percent for their students. 40 pp. Reproducible for classroom use. $6.25 plus $1.25 p&h. 20 copies or more, 10 percent off. Nut Cracker, 9 Robin Circle, Madison, WI 53705.

### AT-RISK STUDENTS

***Nonachieving Students at Risk: School, Family, and Community Intervention.*** Harry W. Sartain. Analyzes the frustration, depression, and delinquency patterns and dropout trends that put more than one-fourth of students at risk of failure. Offers ideas for implementing change in classrooms now. 64 pp. $7.95. Stock no. 3074-5-00-D. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.

### LITERATURE




***The Graywolf Annual Five: Multicultural Literacy.*** Rick Simonson and Scott Walker, editors. Extends the "cultural literacy" debate by offering essays by minority writers—plus a "preliminary list" of some 500 items you need to know to be *multiculturally* literate! 204 pp. $8.50. From booksellers or for $1.50 more from Graywolf Press, P.O. Box 75006, St. Paul, MN 55175. (Also available from NEA Professional Library Book Club. See note below.)

***Using Literature in the Elementary Classroom.*** John Warren Stewig and Sam Leaton Sebesta. Suggests how to use children's trade books for whole-language teaching in the elementary classroom and provides lists of suitable children's books and readings for teachers. 132 pp. Stock no. 56185-0015. $8.95; NCTE members, $6.75. National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801.

***The "Free or Inexpensive" feature is included in* NEA Today *as a service to readers. Items listed are selected by the editors at their discretion from review copies submitted by publishers.***

*Membership in the NEA Professional Library Book Club is a good way to keep current on books in education. For information, write NEA/PLBC at 230 Livingston St., Northvale, NJ 07647 (1-201-767-4903).*

# Your NEA

## REACHING OUT

### Helping Hands

Seven local projects designed to prevent student dropout are getting grants of up to $5,000 each from the NEA-based National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. The local Associations involved and their projects are—

► The Fremont (Calif.) United District Teachers Association for the Life Skills Motivational Program, which gives learning-disabled students a chance to earn money while they learn.

► The Metcalfe County (Ky.) Education Association for Project Rebound, which aims to curb the county's high dropout rate by bringing students' basic skills up to grade level with special tutoring and counseling.

► The Springfield (Mass.) Education Association for Project Incentive: Changing Attitudes Toward School, which teaches and models appropriate school behavior for problem students at one inner-city elementary school.

► The Buncombe County (N.C.) Association of Educators at Swannanoa Middle School for Swannanoa for the People Project, geared to lower the dropout rate by focusing on the school's at-risk students, improving student grades, and decreasing school suspension rates.

► The NEA-Clayton (N. Mex.) for the Clayton Dropout Prevention Program, which will provide teacher and parent volunteer tutors and counseling for 75 K-8 students who have frequent discipline problems and are in danger of failing.

► NEA-Gadsden (N. Mex.) for Operation Stand By a Student, which will try to lower the dropout rate by providing tutoring and other services for high-risk students.

► The South Lane (Oregon) Education Association for Intervention for At-Risk Students: Focus on Career Awareness, which will make academically at-risk students aware of career opportunities through their daily school curriculum and help them develop responsible work habits.

### Parental Involvement

NEA President Keith Geiger and North Carolina Superintendent of Schools Bob Etheridge recently opened the Second Institute on Parent Involvement, sponsored by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, in Charlotte, N.C. Some 800 participants explored ways to link schools, parents, and communities for better educational results.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission
FREEDOM TRAIL POSTER AND HOLIDAY GUIDE
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LIVING THE DREAM

### King Day Posters Available

The NEA again announces the availability of the "Commemorative Freedom Trail Poster/Holiday Guide." This full-color, 18" × 28", two-sided poster highlights events in the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., and suggests some activities for affiliates and members.

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday Commission will send Freedom Trail Posters/Holiday Guides at a reduced rate to NEA members; place your order soon to get a special NEA version. When the Commission runs out of these, it will fill members' orders with its own poster (same text but no NEA identification) at the same reduced rate.

The Commission will also fill NEA members' orders for full-color 8½" × 13¼" brochures. Also offered at a reduced price, the brochures are ideal for displaying on bulletin boards and distributing to students and participants at King holiday activities.

If you want to have the Freedom Trail Posters/Holiday Guides early in January, place your order now.

**Freedom Trail Posters/ Holiday Guides**

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|---|---|
| 1-10 | $3.50 each |
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| 21 or more | $2.25 each |

**Freedom Trail Brochures (minimum order of 25)**

| | |
|---|---|
| 25-49 | .37 each |
| 50-99 | .33 each |
| 100-249 | .30 each |
| 250 or more | .25 each |

Specify the number of posters or brochures you're ordering and combine both orders in one payment. When submitting your order, send your name, address, and phone number along with your payment by check, money order, or purchase order made payable to Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday Commission. Mail to: Freedom Trail, 8391 Main St., P.O. Box 302, Ellicott City, MD 21043. For more information, contact the National Coordinator of the Freedom Trail Project at 1-301-596-5253.

### Look and Listen for the NEA Message

The advertising portion of NEA's media campaign continues this month during American Education Week (Nov. 12-18) and will continue between Christmas and New Year, during February, and during Teacher Appreciation Week (May 6-11).

The ads premiered in October on radio and cable TV in 26 states and in the San Francisco, Denver, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., markets. Radio spots have aired on both NBC and CBS radio networks, plus Mutual Broadcasting, Sheriden Broadcast Network, Talk-Net, National Black Network, and the Hispanic Radio Network.

**Classroom Encounters: Problems, Case Studies, Solutions by R. Baird Shuman**

Here are over 60 actual situations which teachers face daily in the classroom and with which they are often ill-prepared to cope.

This book goes into every aspect of school life -- inside the classroom and out. 256pp. 6" X 9" paper

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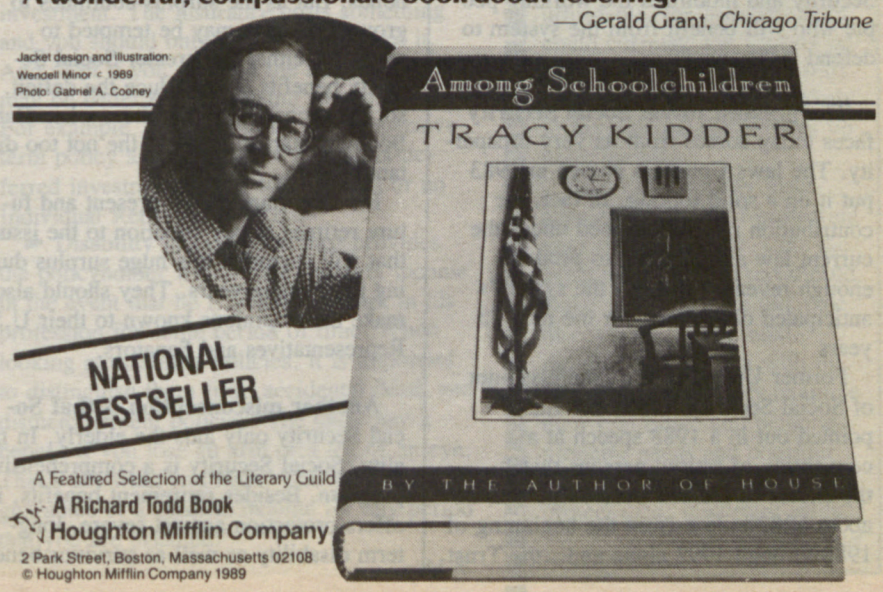
**"Kidder's prose is fine, lucid, readable; his book has come along just in time....** Teachers who read [*AMONG SCHOOLCHILDREN*] will recognize their daily lives in it, their victories and defeats, joys and sorrows." —James Herndon, *San Francisco Chronicle*

**"A wonderful, compassionate book about teaching."** —Gerald Grant, *Chicago Tribune*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BY THE AUTHOR OF HOUSE

YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

# SICK OR SOLVENT?

## The Truth About Social Security

Most Association members think of their retirement income as resting on a three-legged stool. The legs are their pension from their employer, their savings, and Social Security. People who plan to retire in the next two decades may wonder, however, whether this stool isn't a little wobbly. In particular, they ask, how secure is the Social Security System, really?

Six years ago, the Social Security Trust Fund was on the verge of bankruptcy. Today, that's not a problem—the Fund will run a surplus of close to $60 billion in 1989 alone. Still, many people remember only the crisis, so they assume that Social Security won't be around when they need it.

This false assumption isn't just distressing, it's dangerous: people who don't expect anything from Social Security aren't ready to protect it against future challenges. That's why NEA is part of a nationwide coalition of more than 100 labor, retiree, and disability groups known as Save Our Security (SOS). SOS exposes myths about Social Security and mobilizes the working people who will benefit from the system to defend it vigorously.

**The greatest threat Social Security** faces today comes from its very prosperity. The laws Congress passed in 1983 put it on a solid footing. In fact, the contribution rates prescribed under the current law are intended to produce enough revenues to meet the system's anticipated obligations for the next 75 years.

Former United States Commissioner of Social Security Robert M. Ball pointed out in a 1988 speech at a convention of retired persons that "... the excess of income over outgo will be about $283 billion from the beginning of 1988 through 1992 alone and...the Trust Funds will grow much more rapidly in the following 30 years, finally reaching $12 trillion ($2.6 trillion in 1988 dollars). For 50 years, all but the most pessimistic assumptions show substantial surpluses."

It's those surpluses that give cause for concern. Presently, the government is investing the excess funds in Treasury bonds. But as the surplus continues to grow, Congress may be tempted to spend it—either for greater Social Security benefits or to reduce the deficit. If so, the money won't be there when Baby Boomers start to retire in the not too distant future.

It's important for all present and future retirees to pay attention to the issues that will surround this huge surplus during the coming years. They should also make their opinions known to their U.S. Representatives and Senators.

**Another misconception is that So**cial Security only aids the elderly. In reality, Social Security is a comprehensive program. Besides retirement benefits, it offers protection against severe, long-term disability as well as survivor benefits for widows, dependent children, and parents of covered workers.

You couldn't buy the protection provided by this extra coverage in the private sector just by increasing your present personal savings rate substantially. You'd also have to purchase insurance policies providing extra disability and death benefits. Even if you could afford the premiums, these policies probably couldn't match Social Security's ability to adjust for inflation over time.

Another important benefit of Social Security's coverage is that it's 100 percent portable. In today's mobile society, where people change jobs and even careers several times during their working lives, this feature is increasingly important.

Actuaries at the Social Security Administration have calculated that, on average, even workers in their twenties can expect to get somewhat more than the full value of their own and their employers' contributions compounded at an interest rate that exceeds prices by 2 percent. For a safe investment, that's a reasonable return.

In practical terms, Social Security benefits are too valuable to take lightly. Someone who retires at age 65 after taking home average earnings throughout his or her working life can expect to get Social Security payments equal to about 41 percent of earnings at retirement. In 1986 that average payment amounted to $576 a month. People who earn less than average can look forward to a higher percentage of their earnings, people who earn more than average will get a lower percentage.

If wages continue, as expected, to rise faster than the cost of living, the real value of Social Security payments will rise, too. By 2015 the average monthly payment is expected to climb to the equivalent of $797 in 1986 dollars.

The wise way to think of Social Security is as a source of regular income you can count on when you need it the most—unless some legislative innovation slips past you and snatches it out of your hands.

## Time for Action

As you begin to plan for your retirement, there are steps you can take to ensure that you get the most out of Social Security.

► Make sure you're covered. In some states, public employees covered by a state retirement system may not be eligible for Social Security. But you can still get coverage by working a part-time job. All you have to do is earn $50 in "covered employment" in a three-month period to get credit for that quarter. You must earn a certain number of "quarters of credit" to be eligible for Social Security. This number depends on your date of birth—for most people it's 40 quarters.

You should also make sure that other members of your family earn their quarters as soon as possible.

► Monitor your present Social Security status. Every three years, it's wise to review your past recorded earnings and the quarters of coverage you've accrued.

SOS
SAVE OUR SECURITY

Call the Social Security administration toll-free at 1-800-937-2000 for a Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statements form (Form SSA-7004). Complete it and mail it back, and in a few weeks you'll get a statement telling you, among other things, the monthly benefit your spouse and children could get if you died.

► Stay involved. The Social Security Trust Fund belongs to you. To learn more about how you can help protect this valuable asset, contact Save Our Security, 1201 16th St., N.W., Suite 222, Washington, DC 20036.

We get our money's worth from the Social Security System—as individuals, as family members, and as a society.

Social Security enables families to pool the risk of providing financial help and housing for aging parents. It ensures that as many retired workers as possible can support themselves independently and with dignity.

Social security serves society by enabling us to share the responsibilities of protecting one another against risks that are foreseeable (aging) and those that are unforeseeable (disability and early death). This responsibility shared between generations is the very essence of democracy and should be carefully protected.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

# INSURANCE
## HOW MUCH? WHAT KIND?

**This is the third in a series of articles on the financial challenges facing an NEA member couple in Holden, Missouri.**

Greg and Nancy Montgomery are spending this school term sorting through their finances. They've already worked out a balance sheet and a budget. This month, they examine their insurance needs to make sure their most important asset—their livelihood—is protected.

First, life insurance. How much do the Montgomerys need to protect each other and their two children, Evan, 6, and Erin, 1½? The purpose of a life insurance policy should be to replace a good part of the policyholder's after-tax income with earnings that can be generated by the death benefit. In other words, the survivor should be able to invest the money and use the earnings to replace lost income.

Gregg, 33, and Nancy, 32, each earn a little over $25,000 a year. Aiming for insurance that would replace about half their gross incomes is probably what most financial planners would advise them to do.

To figure out how much insurance that would be, most financial planners figure that the death benefit could be invested to earn about 8 percent. To replace half their incomes with earnings on the death benefit, the Montgomerys would each need about $150,000 worth of insurance. If $150,000 were invested at 8 percent, it would earn about $12,000 a year. If something happened to both Gregg and Nancy, $300,000 worth of insurance would provide a custodian with $24,000 a year to take care of their children.

The Montgomerys each have a small term policy paid for by the school districts where they work. Nancy's policy is $10,000; Gregg's is $20,000. Gregg also bought a $25,000 cash value policy while he was in college. Although he now believes that the yearly premium of $276 is too much for too little insurance, his policy has a cash value of $4,500 so he will keep it and supplement it with other insurance.

Six years ago, Gregg and Nancy each bought a limited payment whole life policy with a death benefit of $25,000. Here's how that works: they pay premiums into the policy for 20 years. Then, although they pay nothing more, their insurance coverage continues and the cash value continues to build up until retirement, when they can either take their accumulated earnings as a lump sum or roll it into an annuity. An annuity pays a guaranteed monthly income for life.

"When we bought the policies, we'd just started teaching," Nancy recalls. "We'd also just had a son and it prompted us to look down the road a little bit." One of the things they saw when they looked down the road was that many teachers don't have a comfortable lifestyle in retirement. Though they look forward to state teacher pensions, Gregg and Nancy know that saving now will leave them better off when they retire. "We decided by looking at the lifestyles of other retired teachers that we wouldn't have enough to live on just from teaching," Nancy says. "We thought with these policies we could get the life insurance and have sort of an annuity built into them, too."

Four years later, they doubled the death benefit on the policies to $50,000 for each of them. Gregg pays about $700 a year for his policy; Nancy pays about $600. (She is a year younger than Gregg. Women's rates are also lower because they have a longer life expectancy.) They will pay the premiums until they reach age 50. When they turn 65, Nancy's policy will have a cash value of $95,000; Gregg's policy will be worth $90,000. The Montgomerys also bought $5,000 policies for each of the children for a total premium of about $80 a year. Nancy has one additional policy: a $50,000 term policy that she bought from NEA Special Services. Her premium is $56 a year.

The Montgomerys have wisely selected a blend of term insurance and investment insurance. But they are a bit shy of the total amount of insurance protection they should have. Perhaps $150,000 seems like a lot of insurance. But planners point out that one of the most common mistakes people make is to wait too long to get full insurance coverage. If either of the Montgomerys should develop a serious health problem, they may become uninsurable. Furthermore, if either decides to change jobs, their school policies won't travel with them.

Nancy's $110,000 worth of insurance is within close range of the goal. Gregg's $95,000 is a bit short; he could probably use just a bit more insurance protection. Once the Montgomerys have considered all their financial goals this year and weighed the importance of each, Gregg might consider an inexpensive term policy like the NEA policy Nancy has to make up the difference. Nancy may want to increase the death benefit on her term policy a little as well.

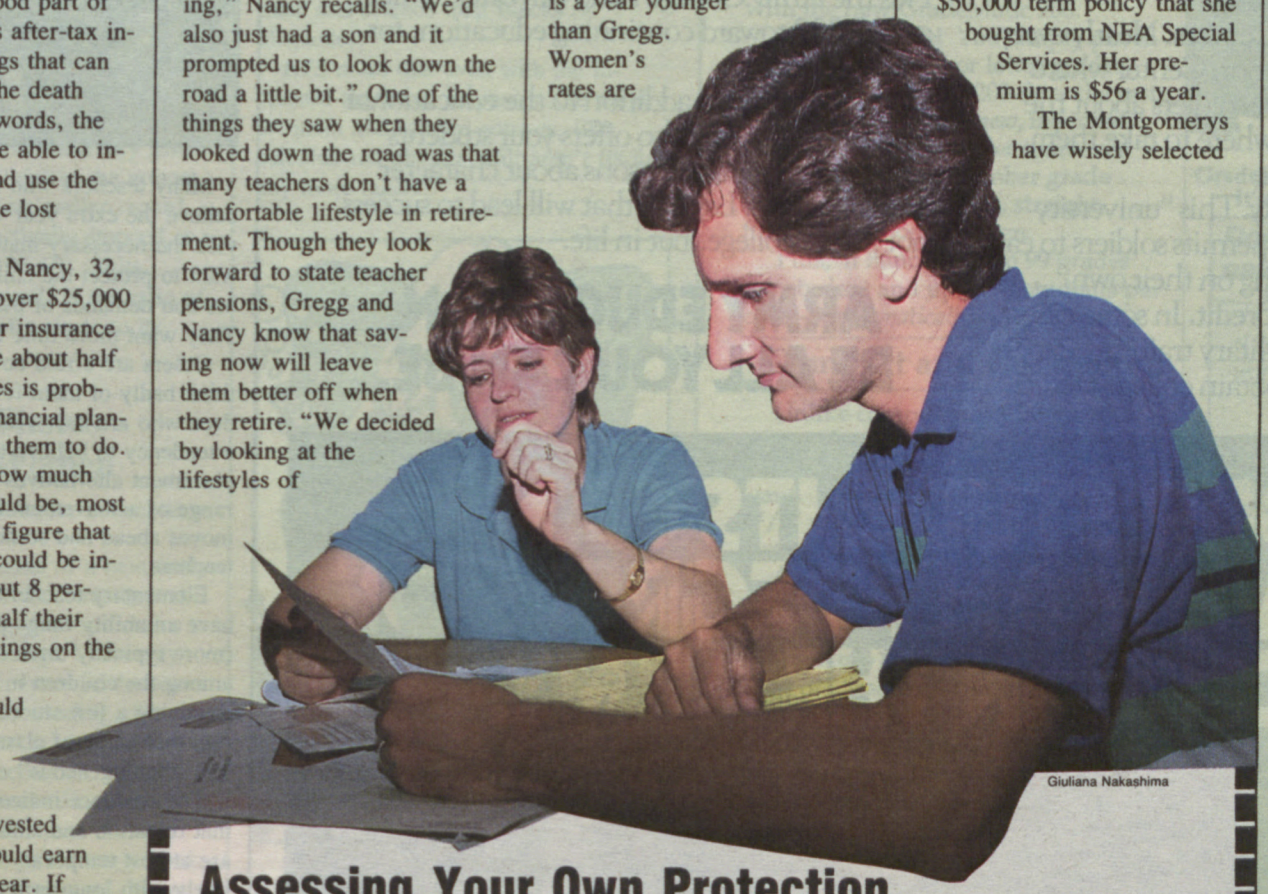
Although the Montgomerys have done a good job with life insurance, there is a gaping hole in their insurance coverage to protect their livelihood. They have no disability income insurance.

Most working people do need coverage to replace a certain portion of their income if they are disabled longer than the period for which they have sick leave.

Because disability payments are tax-free if *you* pay the premiums, it's not necessary to replace your entire income. But there are some important things to look for in a good disability policy: It should be renewable at the same premium until age 65 and it should pay you if you are unable to perform the duties of your regular profession. Disability policies are quite expensive. To make them more affordable, the Montgomerys could correlate the waiting period before benefits will start with sick leave they are likely to have available—perhaps up to six months.

Life and disability insurance are the core of protecting your earning power. Like the Montgomerys, you too should make sure you have this type of coverage. Then, next month, follow along with the Montgomerys as they examine their real estate and personal property needs and consider the insurance they need to protect these important assets.

*—Mary Rowland*



Giuliana Nakashima

## Assessing Your Own Protection

If someone other than you is dependent on your income, you need life insurance and disability income insurance. The chances that you will be disabled for some period of time before you reach age 65 are actually much greater than the chance that you will die.

Here's what you should consider when buying these policies:

► Term life insurance provides pure insurance protection—a straight death benefit to the survivor—for a specific period of time. Although it may be renewed, the premium increases as the policyholder grows older. Term life insurance is the cheapest way to provide insurance protection for your dependents.

► Whole-life insurance, also called cash-value insurance or permanent or investment insurance, averages out the cost of insurance over the policyholder's lifetime. In order to offer a level premium for life, insurers charge more for these policies in early years. The policyholder gets a predetermined death benefit as well as a growing cash value.

A whole life policy combines a tax-deferred investment with insurance protection. The policyholder may borrow his or her cumulative cash value tax-free for any reason at any time. These policies thus accumulate wealth that can be tapped as retirement income or as a tax-free loan to buy a house, start a business, or pay college tuition.

Although whole life policies have flexibility, they shouldn't be viewed as a pure investment. The insurance costs something and you should only buy it if you need it. And even if you do need the insurance, you may be better off purchasing something else. For example, you could buy an inexpensive term policy and combine it with a tax-deferred investment like a 403 (b) plan or an Individual Retirement Account.

► Disability income insurance provides the policyholder with a base monthly income in the event that he is unable to work in his profession for some period of time. When looking at disability policies, it is important to distinguish them from accidental death and dismemberment policies. The latter pay a benefit if you lose an arm or a leg or an eye. That's not what you need. You need the guarantee of a specific income for any period that you are disabled.

*—M.R.*

RESEARCH CLUES

# Retention Holds Kids Back

By Robert McNergney and Martin Haberman

If ever a school practice not only ignored research but operated in opposition to it, retention is that practice. New research concludes that:

► Retention in grade has no academic benefit. At-risk students who are promoted achieve as well as, or better than, those retained.

► Retained students are worse off on all measures of personal and psychological adjustment, self-concept, attitude, and attendance.

► Retained students are 30 percent more likely to drop out than others. Students retained more than once are almost certain to do so.

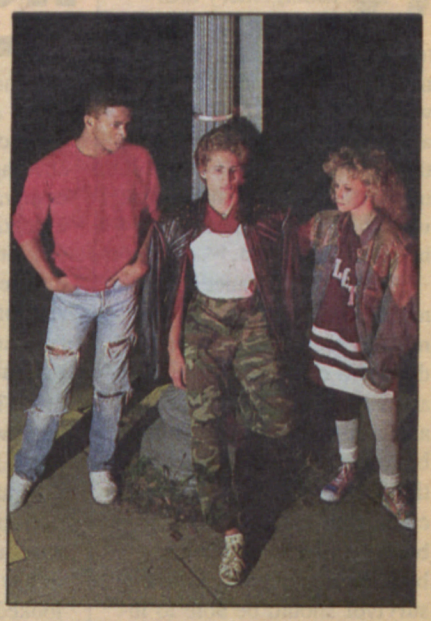
► Two years in kindergarten do not solve the problems of "immaturity" or low achievement.

► Two years in kindergarten or one in kindergarten and one in a transition class don't prepare students for first grade any better than a year of kindergarten.

► Children and parents report lasting hurts from retention, no matter how young the retained child.

► There is no evidence whatever that physical size correlates with achievement. Neither the child nor the child's new classmates accept the retention better if the child is small.

► Whether or not teachers retain students, most view the practice as beneficial, or at least benign.



Many teachers who favor retention believe the extra year will really provide the necessary maturation. They want to protect the child from the rigors and demands of the next grade. They want more time to remediate.

Others are afraid colleagues will think badly of them for promoting children who are not "ready." And there's a tendency to believe that retention and placement alternatives will narrow the range of achievement in the class that moves ahead and so help its subsequent teachers.

Elementary teachers will inevitably have an ability range of two years (more typically three or four years) among the children in their classrooms. Retaining a few students will not narrow this range of class achievement. The "homogeneous" class is a mirage.

The evidence indicates unequivocally that retention and similar arrangements are at best temporary solutions, very likely with long-term effects opposite to those desired.

Reform rhetoric aside, retaining 5 to 10 percent of students is a symbolic gesture. It neither provides teachers with more homogeneous classrooms nor helps children catch up. It simply adds more children to the million disillusioned students who drop out each each year.

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Those interested in learning more about what research says regarding retention should consult: L. A. Shepard and M. L. Smith (eds). *Flunking Grades: Research and Policies on Retention.* New York: Falmer Press, 1989.

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*Robert McNergney is a professor of education and director of the Commonwealth Center for the Education of Teachers, University of Virginia and James Madison University, Charlottesville, VA 22903. Martin Haberman is a professor at the School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53201. They prepared this column for* NEA Today *with the cooperation of the American Educational Research Association.*

If success is measured by college degrees, your students can do well in the Army. We offer a number of services and programs that offer soldiers an opportunity to pursue just about any degree they want.

**Army Education Centers.** Nearly every Army post has an Education Center where trained counselors advise soldiers about the courses they need, and where to take them, and how to pay for them.

**Independent Study.** This "university without walls" program permits soldiers to earn college credits by studying on their own.

**Non-Traditional Credit.** In some cases, soldiers can use their military training, experience and schooling to obtain college credits.

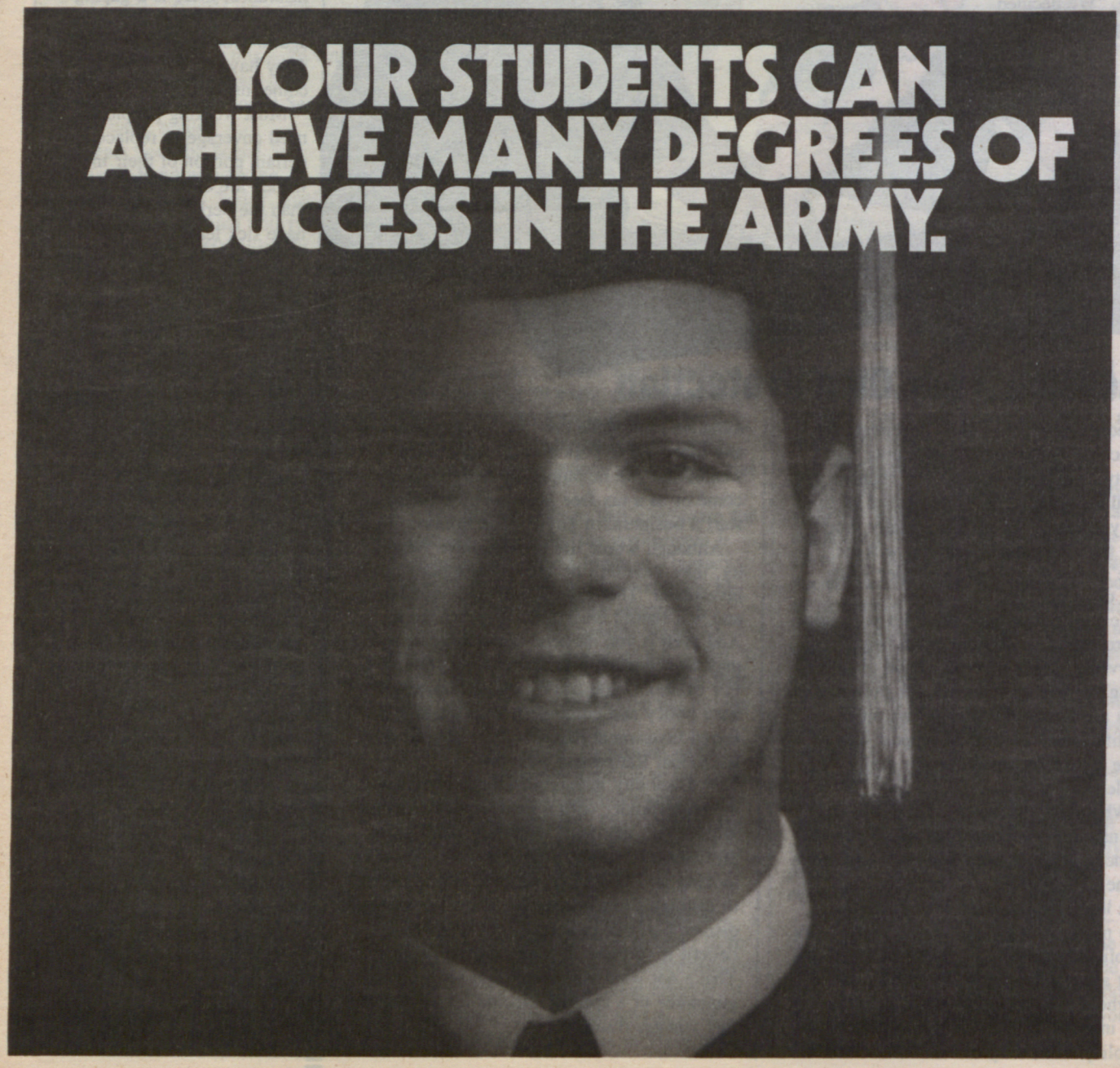
**Tuition Assistance/Financial Aid.** Any new soldier may be eligible to have part of his or her tuition paid by the Army.

Additionally, the Montgomery GI Bill Plus the Army College Fund can offer as much as $25,200 toward continuing education, for qualified soldiers.

Of course, in addition to the educational benefits, the Army also offers your students some other valuable lessons about character and discipline. Lessons that will lead to success not just in college, but in life.

**ARMY EDUCATION. BE ALL YOU CAN BE.**

**YOUR STUDENTS CAN ACHIEVE MANY DEGREES OF SUCCESS IN THE ARMY.**



## TRENDS

### One Billion Pieces of *Pi*

Want to put your computer through the "ultimate stress test"? Try carrying *pi* to over 1 billion digits.

For two Columbia University mathematicians, 3.14159—the standard six-digit expression of *pi*—wasn't good enough. In June they set a record by working out *pi* to 480 million digits. Working on two IBM supercomputers, Gregory and David Chudnovsky tested their software's abilities to the utmost.

Far surpassing their earlier record, the two researchers finally stopped at a remarkable 1,011,196,691 digits.

*Pi*, as you will recall, is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.

### Chem Text Photos Discourage Women

Judging from the pictures, science is a man's domain.

That's the conclusion of a new study that found high school chemistry textbooks overwhelmingly feature males in their illustrations. Lehigh University researcher Judith Bazler says the seven best-selling books are sending girls the message that physical sciences are "highly masculine activities."

Bazler found current editions of the books somewhat better than those of the early '70s. None of the early books provided a balance of pictures of men and women, but one of the current books did.

Calling for change, Bazler notes, "If women do not see women in science, if their teachers are 95 percent men, and if textbooks are predominantly male, they won't go into science unless they're specifically out to break down those barriers."

### More Kids Go to Work—For Child Care

Little kids should be going to work: that's the majority opinion in a recent *Washington Post*-ABC News poll. Going to work, that is, to get day care at their parents workplaces. What's more, over half the respondents said providing either day care at the work place or child-care benefits was part of an employer's duty.

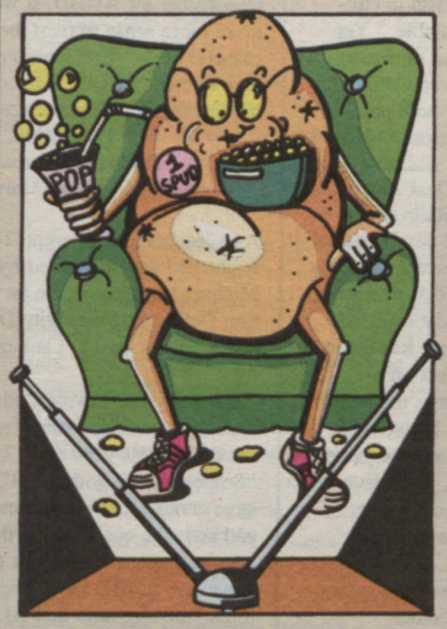
Child-care support has spread from about 100 employers a decade ago to some 4,000 today. Still, finding day care is the worst problem facing families with young children, say U.S. mayors. The National League of Cities says three out of four working mothers have trouble finding good child care—and by next year, mothers in nearly two-thirds of all families will be going out to work. Working fathers are better off, but not by much.

### More Math Courses: Do They Add Up?

High school graduates are taking more math and science courses these days, according to a survey by the Educational Testing Service. The class of '87 for example, took 15 percent more geometry courses and 10 to 15 percent more biology and chemistry than the class of '82.

Distinctions among ethnic groups remain sharp. White students are still much more likely to study advanced math and science than Blacks or Hispanics.

ETS notes that even with the increased academic emphasis, the toughest math and science courses, like calculus and physics, still aren't finding any more takers.




### Fat Not Fit: Sedentary Kids

Nintendo doesn't build muscles, and watching TV doesn't burn calories. A new study concludes: kids are getting fatter—and less fit—than ever.

A 10-year study of nearly 10 million 6- to 17-year-olds shows:

► The proportion of kids who earn "satisfactory" grades on an entire test—including sprints, situps, pushups, and long jumps—dropped from 43 percent in 1980 to 32 percent today.

► Distance-run times declined an average of 10 percent.

► Boys 10 and older weigh 14 pounds more now than in 1983.

► Among the states with the highest composite scores: Kansas, Wisconsin, Florida, Idaho, California, Minnesota, and Iowa.

The study's advice: "The best investment parents can make in the physical fitness of their children is to insist on high quality physical education programs in their schools."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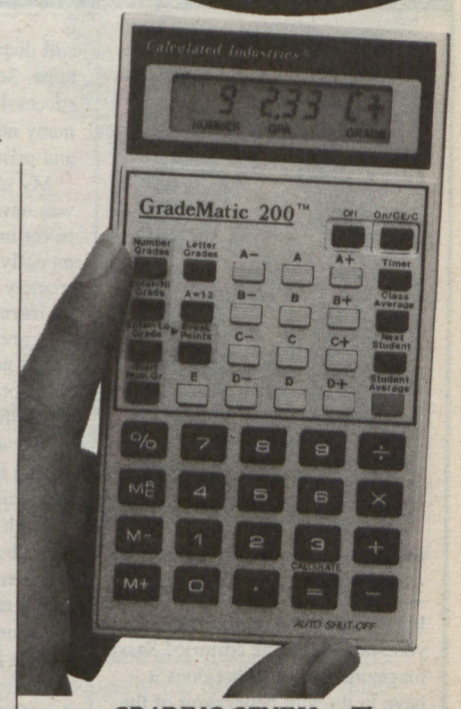


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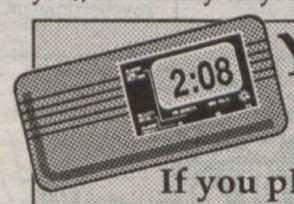


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# Letters

## Spare Me *Sassy*

I don't understand the reason why you spotlighted the editor of *Sassy* magazine (Oct.). What does it have to do with betterment of the teaching profession? I feel you could have chosen another more appropriate personality.

It saddens me to realize an organization that is supposed to be supporting me as a teacher and uplifting young minds is undermining those efforts by supporting the most controversial teenage magazine available.

I feel many educators try hard to instill values and wise judgment to our students in regards to sex. Students who don't necessarily have a parent or other adult to confide in need to have more than just the glitter and gloss of a magazine that sports: "if it feels good, do it—oh, but be careful."

Do these editors print the followup article of the 15-year-old mother on welfare? Or the 16-year-old who is having her second abortion in a year? This irresponsible reporting fails to realize the consequences of giving the adolescents just what they want.

Don't you realize a teenage magazine exhibits a type of "peer pressure?" That's why advertisers support such a market, because teenagers will buy it. Along the same lines, teenagers will also "buy" the values and standards portrayed in these magazines. Why should a 12-year-old feel pushed into sexual activity from a magazine? Aren't there other topics that are more applicable and appropriate for that age group? As a parent, teacher, and concerned adult, I believe so.

*Jennifer Holmes*
Renton, Washington

## Taking Issue

To counter Elaine Hanley's letter (Letters, Oct.),, let me point out that the term Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) was unheard of 40 years ago. Instead, we labeled the kids "bad" or "dummy."

There is currently a psychiatric diagnosis of another kind: Attention Deficit Disorder-Residual Type which refers to *adults* who still display some ADHD symptoms. Some of these adults may be successful professionals. Sadly, many others may be alcoholics and prison inmates.

My son has this disorder. He was never in day care and he was never involved in lots of lessons at an early age. He was simply extremely active from the moment he learned to walk. Many of these kids are difficult from birth.

It's not a fact that diet causes widespread hyperactivity except in a handful of kids with allergies. As far as I know, no reputable research has been able to reproduce Dr. Feingold's results.

High sugar in the diet will cause *short* bursts of high activity in children. ADHD kids on the other hand, may have high activity for 12 hours a day, 365 days a year.

One last point. Some kids have Attention Deficit Disorder with no hyperactivity. They can't pay attention; they can't remember what they are supposed to be doing; and sometimes, they lose their thoughts in mid-sentence.

Medication can be very effective for this group of kids as well, giving them the chance to be successful in school.

I hope the NEA can disregard uninformed viewpoints such as Elaine Hanley's and instead, follow the American Psychiatric Association's guidelines.

*Mary Broomhall*
Conway, New Hampshire

## More on Ritalin

In the article on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder ("Why Joey Can't Sit Still," Sept.), Dr. Michael Levine stated that "a very small group" was responsible for the controversy surrounding the use of Ritalin and that "we don't know why they oppose its use."

For the past 15 years, I have worked with ADHD youngsters and their families. I have become increasingly appalled by the rising use of Ritalin and the failure to provide appropriate treatment for these often bright, energetic children. My concern prompted me to write a book (*Parenting the Over-Active Child: Alternatives to Drug Therapy*, Madison Books, 1989), in which I have documented a number of reasons why parents and educators ought to be more concerned (and even opposed) to the use of Ritalin in the treatment of ADHD. Some of these are as follows—

Ritalin is not necessarily a safe medication with few or no side effects. *The Physician's Desk Reference* clearly points to a number of adverse reactions that children can experience when placed on this drug.

*The Physician's Desk Reference* states specifically that "sufficient data on safety and efficacy of long-term use of Ritalin in children are not yet available." Yet some children are put on a drug regimen for years even though this might be potentially both physically and psychologically harmful in the long run.

*The Physician's Desk Reference* clearly states that Ritalin should be used as "an integral part of a total treatment program which typically includes other remedial measures (psychological, educational, social)." However, once Ritalin produces a calming effect on the child, it often becomes the total treatment program. I have seen numerous parents over the years who, unfortunately, have never been informed that other "remedial measures" were even available or needed.

Studies are consistent in indicating that Ritalin and other psychostimulant drugs have no effect in improving academic performance, social adjustment, or self-esteem. In fact, there is much evidence to the contrary. Further, there are data to indicate that actual declines in academic performance occur over time for youngsters who are placed on a drug regimen.

One of the effects of being placed on medication is that the child comes to believe that he is incapable of controlling his own behavior. If he does well, it is because he took medication. If he does poorly, it is because he "forgot" or failed to take his pill. This does little to help the child in acquiring self-discipline and a sense of responsibility for his own behavior.

Many youngsters who exhibit ADHD symptoms come from broken homes and/or live in chaotic, disorganized environments. Therefore, poor parenting, emotional disturbance, or other psychosocial factors could be responsible for ADHD. It would make more sense to treat the cause(s) of the child's problem than to medicate him. Medication implies that he has a "disease."

*Paul Lavin*, Ph.D.
Psychology Department
Towson (Md.) State University

As a teacher and a parent, I am frightened and concerned by Dr. Michael Levine's article on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; as a scientist, I am angered by it.

First, by Dr. Levine's admission, "Nobody *really* knows the cause." He goes on to say that "Some children with ADHD don't have enough neurotransmitter," and adds the qualification that "Anemia or an over-active thyroid can cause ADHD-like symptoms;" he also says that ADHD could be a "secondary condition due to some mental state like depression," or even the "result of retardation," or "a consequence of a child's being brilliant or bored." From this vague description, it is abundantly clear that ADHD is not a disease, but simply a convenient name for a collection of symptoms that might have a variety of causes.

Secondly, the characteristics of a child with ADHD are all based on subjective qualities that could be very easily misinterpreted. One of the symptoms of ADHD is purposeless activity. But purposeless by whose standards? The child's? The teacher's? A psychologist's?

Finally, let's be honest. Dr. Levine says that ADHD is "probably (due to) an interaction of congenital and environmental factors." Well, I've read a lot of scientific papers myself, and I recognize that statement. It means "We don't know." My suggestion is that until we *do* know, we'd better stop giving children unwarranted labels, and get on with doing what we always have done—evaluating each case individually.

*Gordon P. Bonnet*
Redmond, Washington

When I read "The Ritalin Controversy" (Sept.), I was impressed by the amount of research done. As president of the Massachusetts School Nurse Organization, Inc., I have to defend our state psychotropic drug law yearly to keep our standards from being lowered and to make sure the registered nurse is the professional who dispenses and monitors Ritalin and other such drugs.

Unfortunately, the reference to me in the article gave the false impression that Wellesley public schools has had problems. This is not the case. As former chair of health services, I can say that Wellesley has a strict medication policy and that the dispensing and monitoring of *all* medications is controlled by the registered nurse and school doctor.

*Anne C. Kinsley*, RNBS, CSN
Dover, Massachusetts

The Ritalin article was just a start. How about surveying teachers about how they feel about this issue. I personally have seen students failing day after day and then do a complete turnaround with Ritalin. I was told if that is the need of a child, the Ritalin will work. I feel sorry for the lost children who aren't on Ritalin and need it.

*But*: why do so many children need this? What research is being done about this? Is it food? Is it fluorescent lights? Is it anything environmental? Polio was a disease that crippled children; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is crippling minds and lives.

*Carolyn Creger*
Casper, Wyoming

# Debate

## Should SATs Be Eliminated?

YES

Joe Di Dio

*An elementary school teacher and Association activist for nearly 20 years, Linda Lee Aikens is now assistant principal at Conyers Middle School in Rockdale County, Ga. Aikens has served on the NEA and GAE Boards of Directors and is currently a trustee for NEA Special Services.*

In a landmark New York court case this year, Judge John M. Walker ruled that a state scholarship program discriminated against women because winners were selected solely on the basis of SAT scores.

"After a careful review of the evidence," he said, "this court concludes that SAT scores capture a student's academic achievement no more than a student's yearbook captures the full range of one's experiences in high school."

I agree. SAT scores are the most frequently used and abused statistics in the education world. Although the test was designed to predict students' first-year college grades, it underpredicts the grades of more than 50 percent of those who take it.

The real victims of this biased instrument have been, and continue to be, minorities and women, and the latest averages continue to show wide disparities by race and sex.

The 1989 average score for whites is 937, for Blacks, 737 (1600 is perfect). In only four states is the Black student average score within 100 points of the all-student average score.

In addition, females from all over the country continue to battle an approximately 60-point gender gap in scores on this instrument.

Donald Stewart, president of the College Board, which develops and owns the SAT, admits the Board is considering revamping the test. His reasons: demographics are changing, and the test is being used for purposes other than those for which it was intended.

Last year, the Educational Testing Service (which will earn $33.7 million for administering the SAT this year), began steps to eliminate questions it identified as biased. That's an undisguised admission that bias does indeed exist.

**The use of SAT scores—given their** obvious racial and gender bias—has damaging ramifications. Many colleges and universities rely heavily on the scores in making decisions about admissions, placement, and distribution of scholarship funds. The National Merit Scholarship Corporation uses the equally biased standardized Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) as the sole criterion for distributing some $24 million in scholarships each year.

In striking contrast is the National Achievement Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students, which requires information about high school course work, leadership qualities, and other criteria. In this program, interestingly enough, more females than males have won awards.

**Society's obsession with SAT** scores affects not only which colleges students will consider but also how students perceive themselves as individuals. The devastating effect on some students' self-esteem and confidence is irreparable.

Elimination of these tests could allow families to approach their college investments like consumers. They could care less about a college's popularity and more about whether it could provide the right learning experiences for the individual student involved.

Personally, I'd like to see SATs disappear completely. It's my opinion that the SAT is not a measure of students' achievement abilities but a measure of their test-taking skills. Some higher education institutions and programs have successfully operated for many years without using SAT scores to decide admissions.

One of the greatest benefits to be derived from the elimination of the SAT would be recapturing the effort students put into SAT preparation. Imagine students' being able to put this wasted time and energy into their schoolwork. It would be a joy to watch them build their self-confidence through these accomplishments, instead of watching them destroy it trying to increase pairs of meaningless numbers.

Any instrument that is an inaccurate predictor, is biased against minorities and women, is used to award millions of dollars unfairly, and destroys the self-esteem of our talented youth is of no value to society and must be eliminated.

NO

Shirley O'Neill

*Betty Phillips teaches language arts at Haddon Heights (N.J.) Junior High School. She is immediate past president of the Haddon Heights Education Association, has been a delegate to the NJEA and NEA conventions, and is active on local political and legislative issues.*

As a parent and as a teacher, I've come to realize the value of SATs. They're a benefit to students, parents, colleges and universities, and, hopefully, school districts.

School districts where students aren't achieving acceptable scores on the SAT should re-evaluate the curriculum they are offering, and then strengthen it to present a greater challenge to their students.

Most parents want their children to pursue some type of higher education to increase their earning capability, develop self-confidence, and achieve success in their chosen careers. However, parents often set goals for their children that are impossible for the children to achieve. SAT scores identify students' strengths and weaknesses and help them—and their parents—take a realistic look at goals. Families can look for help to strengthen weak areas, and can then select careers and institutions where their children will find an academic climate commensurate with their abilities.

Colleges and universities want their students to succeed, too, so they base their requirements for admission on the intensity of education they promote. SAT scores are certainly not the only criteria used for admission, but they are important indicators of students' overall knowledge. Together with high school grades, the degree of difficulty of courses taken, extracurricular activities, and personal background, SAT scores help colleges and students make the right choices.

**Knowing where they stand in the** academic community and nationally increases students' self-esteem, whether their scores indicate the possibility of entering a community college, a state university, or an Ivy League school. They know the possibility of success is there if the effort is expended.

Many lower-income and minority students are encouraged by their SAT scores. They and their parents may suddenly recognize that they *are* college material, even though their family may never have included a college graduate. Institutions, recognizing these students' potential from their SAT scores, often seek them out with offers of admission and financial assistance. Consequently the SAT has provided these students with opportunities they might not otherwise have had.

There's been much criticism of the SAT. Critics say it doesn't accurately predict students' success in college. Certainly it can't hope to measure their maturity or self-discipline—critical factors in college success. Some young people are ready for college at 18; others aren't, regardless of any score they may achieve on any test. The SAT doesn't pretend to be the only predictor of success, but it can and does indicate the level of potential a student possesses at a given moment.

**The SAT isn't perfect, but it has** been examined and tested and used by colleges and universities in one form or another since 1926. At present over 1,600 colleges and universities use its information. It's accepted and recognized internationally.

The bias so many want to talk about is minimal. So much effort has gone into developing a fair test, it seems unrealistic in our current society, with all our affirmative action programs, to even discuss it.

An added benefit of the SAT is the academic challenge it poses to our students. After taking the PSATs, many students tell me that they feel "brain drained." They suddenly realize this business of education is a serious one. They're brought face to face with the fact that they must apply themselves with vigor to their math and science; they must develop their verbal and writing skills; and they must read, read, read to score well on the next round of tests. Their intellect and self-discipline are challenged, as well they should be. These young people begin to challenge themselves.

To eliminate the SAT would be a disservice to our young people. It challenges them to achieve their best. It makes them reach just a little higher. Anything that does that, helps them make positive decisions about their future, and can predict success even part of the time is working. Let's keep it!

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